

With the right cause, a revolting backbencher is no laughing stock

To anyone who has served as a Government backbencher (as for seven years I did) — those plankton of the parliamentary food-chain — the Labour leader's proposals for an internal referendum (to make his party's election manifesto binding on Labour MPs) are of real significance.

Along with many fellow-candidates, I never read Conservative Party manifestos in full. They were long and turgid documents whose general drift we knew. On the whole we supported them but

we reserved the right to disagree with individual elements within.

If these were important issues we would have felt some obligation to tell our constituency chairman, but certainly not to inform Conservative Central Office or the party leadership.

Smaller disagreements were rarely raised until they came to a Commons vote. I would forewarn the whips of my anxieties. For example, I refused to support the Assisted Places scheme. The whips called me an idiot but nobody

suggested that I had broken any obligation to our manifesto. Whips, however, would suggest to potential rebels that the electorate had sent us to Westminster as Conservatives and we should think very hard before acting in any other way. Among constituents you were damned if you did and damned if you didn't. Some would praise you for your independence. Others would tell you that they had not voted Conservative to have you vote against Tory measures in the Commons. Both had a point. Any Gov-

ernment backbencher has felt the pull of each argument within his own head and heart. The truth (and I knew it) was that all but a handful of the twenty-odd thousand who voted for me would have voted for a monkey, so long as it sported a blue rosette. It was the Tory programme (or what they took it to be) for which they had voted. Only a minor

ity knew or cared much about me.

But still I persuaded myself, as all backbenchers do, that I owed my constituents some kind of duty to use my own judgment. I also persuaded myself that I owed the parliamentary party the same duty; and that I might dissent from a plank in the party's raft of policies without ceasing to be

a Conservative or losing my moral right to stand as one.

How did I reconcile that with the undoubted fact that my mandate from West Derbyshire was the Thatcher mandate, not the Parris one?

In part it was a matter of self-respect. The backbencher needs to feel his presence matters. He needs to feel, too, that he also represents the many who did not vote for him. There is an element of irrationality here, but it remains emotionally important to backbenchers.

More rational was the argu-

ment that it was important to my party that its leadership must earn our support and could never sleep certain in the knowledge that it would keep it.

To belong to a party among whose MPs there were lively and continuing disagreements about important matters was a source of pride to me and (I supposed) healthy for the party.

The knowledge that I must justify for myself to my constituents my own Commons votes kept me arguing my corner within the party, rather than shrugging "manifesto commitment".

When whips urged "the manifesto" on me I acknowledged the great force of this argument, and it nearly always prevailed. But I never thought it always must and nor really did they, whatever they pretended. This was one tiny lever I had in an otherwise unequal struggle. Between telling me I had no right in any circumstances to rebel, there seemed, and still seems, a small but important difference.

Shephard to broaden autonomy for schools

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

WIDE-RANGING proposals to give all schools more power to run their own affairs and to select more pupils on grounds of ability, leading eventually to the establishment of more grammar schools, will be promised today by the Education Secretary.

In a move that ministers believe will kill lingering suspicions of a rift between herself and the Prime Minister, Gillian Shephard will announce that a White Paper setting out firm proposals for the extension of self-government in schools is to be published in June.

The White Paper will also cover the controversial area of selection. Mrs Shephard is expected to suggest that all schools should consider whether their admission policies best match the needs of their area. The paper will fuel suggestions that the Government is trying to reduce the number of comprehensives.

Outlining plans that could take the Government nearer to its objective of a big increase in the number of opt-out schools, Mrs Shephard will make plain in a speech that she wants to extend self-government in all schools, those run by local authorities as well as those that are grant-maintained.

She wants all schools to have as much power as possible over their budgets, possibly raising from 85 per cent to 100 per cent the proportion of budgets "delegated" to them.

Existing grant-maintained schools will be given more freedom in the way they operate and develop, adding to the attraction of GM status. In particular the Government will examine ways of freeing them further from the purse-strings of local authorities, for



Mrs Shephard with Sir Ron yesterday after he had presented his plans to inject more quality into education

Sixth-form study shake-up ordered

Continued from page 1 and quality at a crucial stage of education. The Government's action plan demands proposals by the end of the year to safeguard A-level standards and reduce inconsistencies between different subjects and examining boards.

There have been persistent suggestions that Mr Major wants to move faster than the Education Department on opting out and selection.

While making plain that she is opposed to a return of the universal 11-plus, which she believes would undo many of the gains made in bringing the diversity and choice to the state sector, Mrs Shephard's speech is intended to lay such suggestions to rest.

Some Tory MPs are known to be irritated that the Prime Minister's Downing Street policy unit has been floating radical policy ideas whose disclosure has undermined Mrs Shephard's attempts to move at a more sensible pace.

with the boards' year later. She has also asked the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority to produce measures to increase the take-up of science and mathematics courses beyond the age of 16.

New one-year AS levels will allow teenagers to study a broad range of four, five or six subjects when they enter the sixth form. They will be encouraged to make one of these an AS level course on "key skills" such as communication and team working demanded by employers.

The Confederation of British Industry said it would have liked Sir Ron to go further and made key skills part of every A level. The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals agreed some students would benefit from the chance to take university course units while still at school. Diana Warwick, its

chief executive, said: "Sir Ron has found a way which we believe will protect standards, at the same time as increasing the scope for broader pre-university education."

University lecturers were sceptical about school pupils taking their courses. David Triesman, general secretary of the Association of University Teachers, said: "The idea that some sixth formers could acquire sufficient undergraduate credits to complete a degree in two years is totally unrealistic. Even if it were possible, it is by no means obvious that it would be desirable."

Head teachers said Sir Ron's review would make sense of the current "jungle" of qualifications. The National Association of Head Teachers particularly welcomed the re-naming of advanced GNVQs as applied A

levels and the creation of a single National Certificate.

However, the association had "serious reservations" about the proposed national diploma at advanced level, which it said was too demanding to be left as a voluntary option.

The Royal Society was among organisations which lobbied for a greater emphasis on core skills to broaden young people's achievements and was pleased they featured prominently in the review. Sir John Horlock, the society's vice-president, also hailed the drive to improve mathematics and science education.

"Urging all schools to spend a full 20 per cent of curriculum time at 16 to 16 on science is a position we support entirely."

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Leading article, page 21

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French CJD case

Continued from page 1
European Commission yesterday.

That led to urgent talks between London and Brussels on an EU support package for measures that are expected to include the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of older dairy cattle — which could cost £3 billion in compensation over the five years it could take to get "mad cow" disease out of the system.

Ministers agreed yesterday that the main priority was to rebuild public confidence in beef, but Downing Street nevertheless criticised the export ban as disproportionate and confirmed that John Major was likely to raise the issue with fellow heads of government at the Turin summit tomorrow.

Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, suggested that Britain might take the Commission to the European Court of Justice, but he admitted that that could take months and was not an immediate solution to the problem. He said the Government was working as speedily as it could to put together a package of measures for which EU help would be available.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, meanwhile finally abandoned the Government's position that it was prepared to adhere to scientific advice that culling was unnecessary. "Yesterday the argument moved. The issue is no longer a question of the safety of British beef," he said. "The question now is a matter of consumer confidence. It is one thing to have a safe product, it is another to command confidence in the market place."

Mr Hogg and Mr Dorrell had earlier both faced heavy criticism from Tory MPs during a four-hour joint session of the Commons health and agriculture select committees.

Edward Leigh accused them of contradicting each other over a cull, while David Congdon and William Powell called for more specific information about the risk of contracting CJD from BSE-infected offal. They complained that scientists' assurance that the risk was "extremely low" was unhelpful.

Mr Leigh said that Mr Dorrell had hinted heavily that partial cull could be expected, but Mr Hogg had denied suggestions of a selective slaughter.

These questions are not being answered today, what this committee will be faced with is an inability to do its job properly," Mr Leigh said. "There will be a statement made to Parliament about some kind of partial slaughter policy, but then up will jump [BSE experts] who will say this is far too little, too late."

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CORRECTIONS

□ Contrary to our report (March 21) Mr Duncan Walker, consultant cardiothoracic surgeon, Leeds, did not himself allege bribery against a colleague. Acting on advice from the General Medical Council, he merely passed on what he had been told on the telephone about a colleague to the Yorkshire Regional Health Authority solicitor.

□ The millennium lecture by the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks (report, March 21) was delivered at the Manchester Business School.

□ Cadbury's chocolate fingers (report, yesterday) do not contain any beef products.

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Chelsea MP admits drink-driving

Sir Nicholas Scott banned from road for leaving crash

By MICHAEL HORNELL

SIR Nicholas Scott, the former Minister for the Disabled, was fined £450 and banned from driving for 12 months after he left an accident where a child's pushchair was trapped between cars. He was also ordered to pay prosecution costs of £450.

The Conservative MP for Chelsea was said to have emerged from the three-car shunt as if he were in a trance. Sir Nicholas, 62, drank up to three glasses of white wine when he made a speech at a party in his west London constituency before the accident.

Sir Nicholas admitted drink-driving but denied failing to stop after the accident in Sydney Street, Chelsea.

Roger Davies, stipendiary magistrate at Horseferry Road Court, central London, found that the MP had failed to remain at the scene after driving his red Volvo into another parked Volvo which hit the buggy and trapped it against a Jaguar.

In the pushchair was Thibault Ferreard, aged three years and eleven months, the son of a Swiss banker.

Yves Perreard, 37, who was with his wife, told the court that he shouted "stop, stop" and waved his arms at the car that caused the accident. After rescuing his son he was unable to find the driver. His son was crying. In attempting to free the boy from the trapped buggy he twisted his ankle.

Sir Nicholas said that he walked 400 yards to the local constituency association headquarters to telephone emergency services, leaving Patricia Sill-Johnstone, his secretary, to take care of

matters. He did not leave his name with anybody because he assumed everyone knew who he was.

The magistrate interrupted the MP's evidence to query why he had walked 400 yards to make his call when he could have stopped at a public telephone or at restaurants on the way.

Sir Nicholas failed to telephone from his headquarters because the building was closed. Without stopping to answer the door, he then walked to the home of his doctor.

There he drank a glass of whisky offered to him while a call was made to police telling officers where he could be interviewed.

A blood test revealed 98

milligrams of alcohol to 100 millilitres of blood, the limit being 80 milligrams.

Dean Ramsey, a local resident who was taking a walk, said that when he knocked on the window of Sir Nicholas's

car he could get no response. "The defendant looked like somebody who had had too much to drink. He looked like he was about to go to sleep. His eyes were closing."

Michele Palmera, a mechanic from east London who was driving past, told the court that a woman at the scene was verbally abusing people.

She allegedly called Mr Perreard "French scum" and asked the crowd that had gathered to disperse at once.

Sir Nicholas told the court that after returning from constituency headquarters he was on his way back to the scene of the accident but realised there was commotion and turmoil.

A woman was shouting: "Lock him up, lock him up."

He did not wish to inflame the crowd by returning.

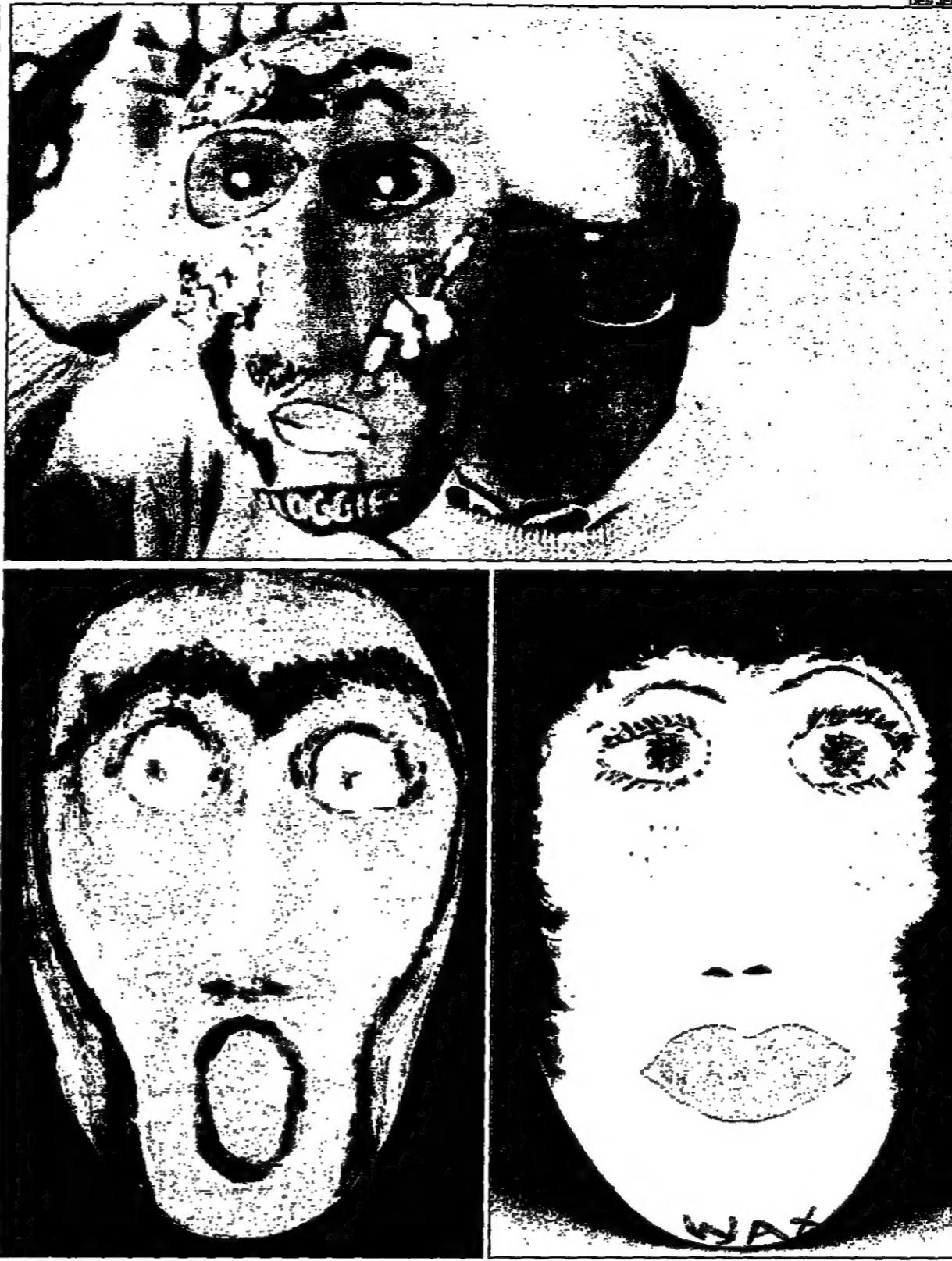
"I thought it was better for me not to hang around, not least because of this woman's behaviour which was increasingly erratic," he said.

The magistrate told Sir Nicholas: "You had no idea at that stage of the damage that might have been caused to the cars or what possible harm might have occurred to the child. There was an obligation for you to remain on the spot for a period of time. That you failed to do."

□ Sir Nicholas, as Minister for the Disabled, had a public fallout with his daughter Victoria after he admitted he misled MPs when he denied that his department had been involved in tactics designed to kill the Disability Bill in 1994.

Victoria, a lobbyist for disabled rights, denounced her father and supported calls for him to resign.

Scott: assumed he was known to everyone



Decorated masks donated to the Prince's Trust by the cartoonist Bill Tidy, top, Lord Healey, left, and the comedian Ruby Wax. Hundreds of celebrities were sent plain, white masks to decorate however they chose. A selection is on display at Olympia until tomorrow. The full collection will be auctioned in November.

Pre-teen children fall prey to shape of fashion models

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

CHILDREN as young as 11 worry about the size and shape of their bodies and are alarmed that the changes taking place at puberty run counter to the dictates of fashion, according to a survey.

Half of girls and a third of boys are concerned about their body image, with twice as many girls as boys wanting to lose weight, the survey of 11 and 12-year-olds found. In many cases the desire for slimness was influenced by the images of fashion models.

The questionnaire survey, published yesterday by the Health Education Authority, was conducted among 536 pupils in three secondary schools. It found that many children undergoing puberty, especially girls, felt they were fat and were alarmed at the unexpected increase in weight.

Girls are particularly concerned about their legs and their stomachs. Many claimed they wanted to be slimmer for themselves, not because they cared about what others thought. One said: "I have photos of me when I was really skinny and dressed up and it really makes me sick to see that I have put on so much weight." The strategies adopted

ed by girls to achieve the ideal shape range through doing very little to taking exercise and to serious attempts at dieting. Dancing or aerobics classes were cited as the "right way" to achieve slimness.

Dieting was seen as particularly difficult at school where children were subject to peer pressure to indulge in snacks and chips, but easier at home.

However, some children — 15 per cent of boys and 11 per cent of girls — say they would like to put on weight. One in 15 children of both sexes felt they were too thin.

Parents interviewed for the survey felt that their children's worries about being overweight were unfounded. They tried to reassure them by explaining that weight problems ran in the family or were a natural phase of adolescence.

Parents were reluctant to start their children on diets, because of fears about anaemia. The survey, included in a report *Health Promotion and the Family*, found parents felt ill-equipped to discuss subjects such as body image, sex and depression with their adolescent children.

Two wronged parties make a right for jilted minister

By RUTH GLEDDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A BAPTIST minister whose wife set up home with their gardener has decided to remarry — and has chosen the gardener's former wife. The Rev Dennis Mickelsen said that his bride, Joan Stannard, was like him, a "wronged party".

Mr Mickelsen, who was last year evicted from his home after he refused to pay a divorce settlement, was devastated when his former wife Audrey, 69, walked out on their 44-year marriage and set up home with Peter Fisk, their gardener, in 1990.

The two couples were once great friends and used to go on drives and outings together. Mr Mickelsen will now marry Mrs Stannard, who was married to Mr Fisk for 42 years but reverted to her maiden name after her divorce, at his church in Sutton, Suffolk, where he has been pastor for 28 years.

Mr Mickelsen, 72, had said he was prepared to go to jail rather than pay a penny towards the £109,500 divorce settlement to his wife, with whom he had four children. He later obeyed a court order to pay his former wife £20,000, half the proceeds of the home, and £625 a month for five years. "I bear no

animosity to any person on this earth including those who have wronged me. But although I sent letters and flowers to my wife after she left, I had no other communication with her apart from two chance meetings at a garage," Mr Mickelsen said.

"I waited and prayed for six years for her to come back. Then I felt in my heart that I could be happy with Joan who like me is also a wronged party. We feel a common bond of Christian faith which is the best union that there can be."

He added: "The Bible says that a marriage can only end if there has been unfaithfulness and there has in this

case. Other ministers and people might think differently but I think there is a place for remarriage when the circumstances are genuine."

Mr Mickelsen said his marriage had met with "a favourable and happy" response from his congregation.

Mrs Stannard said: "I am very happy to be with Dennis. Our lives will be full again.

We have been friends for a long time but we only got serious recently."

The couple plan to live in Mrs Stannard's sheltered accommodation flat in Woodbridge. Their former partners have not married but live 12 miles away at Otley, near Ipswich.

Mr Mickelsen's former wife, Audrey, 69, has been released from hospital when the officer arrived with a warrant for Aldershot magistrates.

She said: "When I was eventually brought before the court I couldn't stand up. I was still holding my nebuliser mask to my face. I nearly passed out."

Ms Coupland, who suffers from asthma, had just been released from hospital when the officer arrived with a warrant for Aldershot magistrates.

She said: "When I was eventually brought before the court I couldn't stand up. I was still holding my nebuliser mask to my face. I nearly passed out."

Mr Pollard, dressed in a Lincoln green tunic, said: "I hear that some people think Robin Hood is a bit of a soft image for the city. For a person to be thrown aside for having a reputation for being fair, just and honest seems to me to be daft."

Money for wrongful arrest 'ridiculous'

By ADRIAN LEE

A WOMAN who was ordered out of her sickbed and wrongfully arrested over two unpaid parking fines described an offer of £150 compensation as ridiculous yesterday.

Caroline Coupland had reported her car stolen at the time the penalties were incurred. But she was told by a police officer that if she did not get dressed and accompany him to court she would be handcuffed.

The mistake was blamed on lost documents and Ms Coupland, 31, of Ash, Surrey, was offered the compensation by Hampshire Magistrates' Court Committee as a "gesture of goodwill". She was told that magistrates, who issued an arrest warrant, have immunity in such cases against claims of false arrest.

Ms Coupland, who suffers from asthma, had just been released from hospital when the officer arrived with a warrant for Aldershot magistrates.

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Lincoln's burghers offer sanctuary to outlawed Robin

By ANDREW PIERCE

LINCOLN has offered a new home to Robin Hood, who faces being outlawed from Nottingham because he is out of date. Civic chiefs in Lincoln are planning to promote its historic links with the enduring hero of British folk history.

Lincoln green, the cloth said to have been worn by Robin and his Merry Men, was woven and dyed in the city. His celebrated robberies of the rich to benefit the poor were conducted, says Lincoln City Council, on the nearby Fosse Way.

More controversially, the city supports the theory advocated by a group of historians that he was not Robin of Loxley, a miller's son, but related to the De Kyme family, which hailed from Lincoln, some 35 miles from Nottingham. Lincoln Cathedral also boasts a medieval manuscript that documents the first connection between Robin and Sherwood Forest.

Geoffrey Ellis, the mayor of Lincoln, said: "We will take full advantage of promoting our connection with the outlaw. A marketing partnership is now looking at an image for Nottingham that would appeal across the board."

Mr Pollard, dressed in a Lincoln green tunic, said: "I hear that some people think Robin Hood is a bit of a soft image for the city. For a person to be thrown aside for having a reputation for being fair, just and honest seems to me to be daft."

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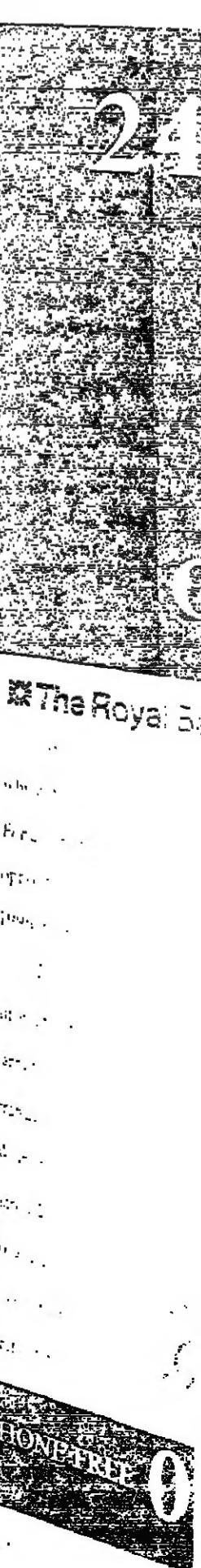
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Paul Preston, President and Chief Executive Officer, McDonald's Restaurants Limited.



Lost evidence that could have saved three lives

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

A MENTAL patient with known homicidal tendencies was allowed back into the community where he killed his father and two pensioners, an inquiry found yesterday.

Jason Mitchell, 25, had persuaded a tribunal that he was sane. Evidence that he was a potential killer had either been lost or ignored.

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC, a former chairman of the Mental Health Commission, made 50 recommendations yesterday, including possibly depriving prisoners of the right to keep medical records confidential.

Mitchell, whose mother left home when he was a child, was a glue-sniffer who became a petty thief. Papers from 1988 produced by a young offenders' institution and prison showed that he was a serious

ly disturbed teenager who believed that television sets talked to him. These records failed to follow him through his next five years of courts and hospital.

In 1990 a vicar allowed Mitchell to sleep in a church in Epsom, Surrey. The next day, Jim Powell, the 70-year-old church cleaner, was attacked with a baseball bat by Mitchell, who threatened to kill him.

Mitchell later told police he was carrying two knives because voices had told him to kill the vicar. He appeared at the Old Bailey and was sent to West Park psychiatric hospital in Epsom.

Jackie Leaver, an occupational therapist at the hospital, provided a report in 1991 detailing Mitchell's innermost thoughts, but the document was dealt with dismissively by

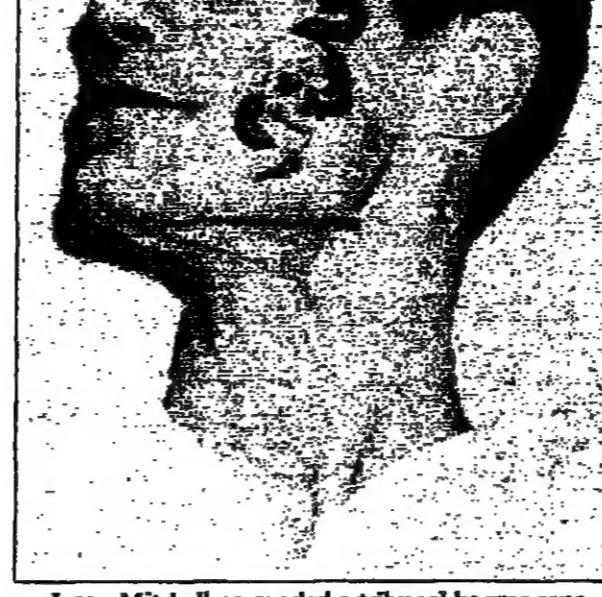
clinicians and other staff. The following year, Mitchell applied for discharge. In 1993 he was transferred to St Clements Hospital in Ipswich, nearer his father's home.

In 1994 Dr Ray Goddard, a consultant psychiatrist, sanctioned Mitchell's release to the community, saying there was no useful purpose in detaining him.

In December of that year Mitchell absconded from his halfway house and broke into the home of Shirley Wilson, a chapel organist, and her husband Arthur, a former station master. He killed the couple, both aged 65. Mitchell then went to his father's home 250 yards away in the village of Bramford, Suffolk. He headed and dismembered Bob Mitchell. The killer told police he wanted practice before

killing and eating a younger victim. After being arrested for murder, he appeared ecstatic and sang *'It's a Wonderful Life'* in his cell. Diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, Mitchell was given three life sentences last July and is at Rampton Hospital.

Sir Louis's panel blamed



Jason Mitchell persuaded a tribunal he was sane

nobody for the triple killings. It recommended that full accounts of criminal acts involving mentally disordered people should become part of their permanent clinical record.

Dr Goddard said yesterday the distress of the case had caused him to question whether he wanted to continue his job. "I think we feel that sometimes we are being scapegoated for a national failure of care in the community," he said.

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He said inquiries should be held only in cases where serious negligence was suspected, rather than automatically as at present.

Nuclear plant hails report

Child leukaemia 'unlikely' to be Sellafield's fault

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE Sellafield nuclear plant in Cumbria is very unlikely to have caused a leukaemia cluster among children in nearby Seascale, a government committee has concluded.

But it admits that no other

single cause can explain the cluster, the subject of repeated official inquiries. Interactions between various factors, including the possibility that leukaemia could be infectious, may be responsible, the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment says.

For four decades, childhood leukaemia has been more common in Seascale than would be expected. There have been eight cases since 1945 of lymphoid leukaemia among those below the age of 25, when less than one would be the norm.

The report reviews data since a committee under Sir Douglas Black examined the issue in 1984. It shows that the excess of cases has continued and remains confined to a very small area. Cumbria as a whole does not show an excess and nor do other areas around Sellafield, where workers at the plant live.

The committee, chaired by Professor Bryn Bridges, examined the possibility that the Seascale cluster might be due to people moving into the area, bringing with them infectious agents to which they were immune, and mixing with others who were susceptible.

The evidence available at present does not convince us that such a large relative risk persisting over more than three decades could be wholly attributed to population mixing," it concludes.

Professor Bridges speculated that if infection was the

cause, then Seascale may have been affected because of a sewage outflow from Sellafield which discharged directly into the River Ehen and flowed out to sea less than a mile from the Seascale beach.

The report says that the high incidence of leukaemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in young people in Seascale between 1963 and 1992 was "highly unlikely to be due to chance" but that "no single factor could account for the increase".

Radiation levels were "far too small" to account for the cases on the basis of present knowledge. Nor is it clear how only the children of Seascale fathers and not those who lived elsewhere could be affected.

Professor Bridges added:

"Only time will tell. We need to know a lot more about childhood leukaemia. Only then will we be able to go back and then we will be able to understand the true scale of the Seascale case."

British Nuclear Fuels welcomed the finding that occupational exposure to radiation was very unlikely to account for the excess of leukaemias in Seascale. David Young, BNFL spokesman, said: "We are pleased that at last the speculation that radiation has caused these problems has been lifted from us."

"But we have always felt that to blame these problems on radiation was a bit simplistic."

Janine Allis-Smith, whose son Lee was diagnosed with leukaemia in 1984 at the age of 12, said the report was inconclusive and she was still convinced his illness was caused by radioactive waste from the Sellafield plant.



Sellafield power station on the Cumbrian coast

£146,000 lottery prize goes unclaimed

Gardener jailed for assault at council

By ADRIAN LEE

A SMALL fortune will slip through the fingers of one National Lottery player to-night when the deadline expires on the highest unclaimed prize. Unless the player with a ticket bought in Torquay comes forward by midnight, £146,245 plus interest, will go to the lottery's five good causes.

Prize-winners have 180 days to make themselves known to the organiser, Camelot. Since the National Lottery was launched 18 months ago, £33.2 million of unclaimed prizes have gone to good causes and £22.2 million is in Camelot's bank account awaiting claims.

Unclaimed prizes amount to 1 to 2 per cent of the £2 billion paid to winners. Camelot said: "It is terrible that someone could miss out on such a huge prize. It might not be a million but it is the sort of sum which could transform someone's life."

The ticket was bought for the draw on September 30 last year, when the numbers were 10, 11, 29, 32, 33, 40 and the bonus was 16. There was one jackpot winner, who claimed £49.9 million. The holder of the missing ticket chose five correct numbers plus the bonus.

Other prizes waiting to be claimed include £104,746 from the Redhill area of Surrey (January 6 draw); £109,892 from Liverpool (December 16) and £78,970 from Newport, Gwent (February 3).

All the jackpot winners have come forward within a month, although one left his ticket in the pocket of his jeans, where it was discovered on wash day. A player holding a ticket worth £342,000 waited five months. "The ticket-holder was aware he or she had won but was very casual about it," Camelot said.

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Clarke thwarts Cabinet debate on referendum

BY NICHOLAS WOOD AND JAMES LANDALE

KENNETH CLARKE has blocked today's Cabinet meeting from resolving the impasse over a referendum on a single currency. It is understood that the Chancellor has told John Major that he believes that Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, should be present if ministers are to decide an issue of such magnitude.

Mr Rifkind is accompanying the Queen on a state visit to Eastern Europe and will not return to Britain until after joining Mr Major in Turin on Friday for the opening of the inter-governmental conference on the European Union.

The Foreign Secretary has produced a paper on the implications of a referendum, such as collective responsibility and timing. Mr Clarke believes that he should be at the Cabinet table to contribute to the debate. It is understood the Foreign Office was prepared to field a junior minister if the Prime Minister had wanted to press ahead today.

Mr Major, who has been fully occupied this week with the beef crisis, is understood to have agreed to defer the decision. He initially wanted to announce a referendum commitment at the Conservative Central Council in Harrogate

on Saturday. The delay means a decision will be postponed until next week or after Easter.

Mr Clarke's insistence on a "serious discussion" in Cabinet is being taken at Westminster as another sign of his determination to press his case that a referendum on a single currency would be a mistake.

Yesterday Mr Major came under pressure from the party faithful to oppose a single European currency as they demanded a clear right-wing agenda for the next election. As he prepared to travel to Turin tomorrow, they expressed their hostility to further European integration.

In the biggest such survey, 30,000 Tories across the country last autumn demanded the reform of Europe's agriculture and fisheries policies and a curb on the powers of the European Court of Justice. They called for tax and welfare cuts, a boost to home ownership, fresh support for the family and a return of British heroes such as Drake, Nelson and Churchill to school history lessons.

The Prime Minister ordered the survey last May to give grassroots members the chance to help shape poli-

cies for the next election. *Our Nation's Future*, published yesterday, will be fed into the Downing Street Policy Unit and Cabinet committees drawing up the manifesto.

Although the party faithful said that Britain should remain a member of the European Union, they opposed further loss of British sovereignty. "There is common agreement that any move toward a 'United States of Europe' should be resisted fiercely and a clear view that no more powers should be transferred to Brussels," the report said.

The single currency was a topic of serious debate in the constituencies. The majority of participants were sceptical about the benefits. "However, they were divided over holding a referendum. Some argued that one was vital to decide constitutional issues. Others said a referendum was not needed because there were no circumstances in which a Tory government should take Britain into a single currency.

One of the suspended MPs, Graham Riddick, yesterday claimed the new ruling vindicated him. He and his supporters on the Conservative benches said they would be appealing to the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee to reopen its inquiry into the conduct of the Colne Valley MP. Mr Riddick added that the commission had apologised for failing to take evidence from him be-

MP hails press body's verdict

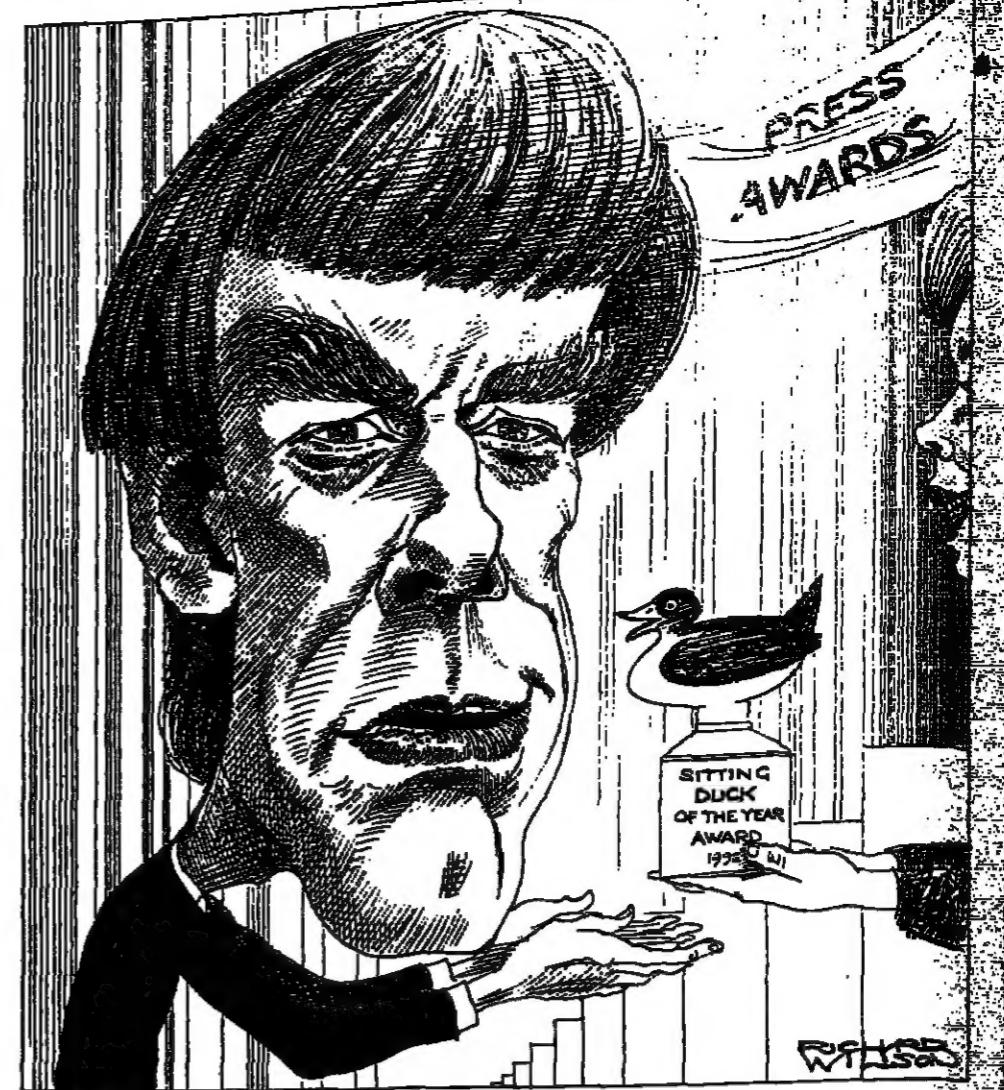
BY NICHOLAS WOOD
CHIEF POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

A PRESS watchdog yesterday rebuked *The Sunday Times* for its methods in the "cash for questions" affair last year that led to two Tory MPs being suspended from the Commons for two weeks.

The Press Complaints Commission reversed its previous finding that the newspaper had been entitled to use subterfuge to test MPs' reactions to the offer of £1,000 for a Commons question. In 1994 a reporter posed as a businessman to approach 20 MPs. The article that followed led to the Nolan clampdown on MPs' outside earnings.

The commission said that *The Sunday Times* did not first gather enough hard information that an issue of serious public interest was at stake, the ground on which newspapers' Code of Practice allows the use of subterfuge.

One of the suspended MPs, Graham Riddick, yesterday claimed the new ruling vindicated him. He and his supporters on the Conservative benches said they would be appealing to the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee to reopen its inquiry into the conduct of the Colne Valley MP. Mr Riddick added that the commission had apologised for failing to take evidence from him be-



fore reaching its original verdict.

But John Witherow, editor of *The Sunday Times*, rejected Mr Riddick's interpretation of the commission's new findings set out in a letter from Lord Wakeham, its chairman, to Tony Newton, the Leader of the Commons. Mr Witherow said the statement was a fudge making

good name. He said the commission had ruled that *The Sunday Times* should have told its readers that a journalist, when posing as a businessman, discussed a perfectly legitimate paid consultancy with me during two substantive conversations. This proves that I did not accept cash for asking questions."

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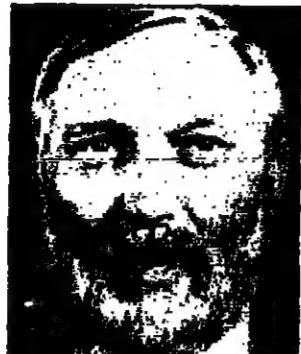
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Brussels confirms ban but offers conditional aid

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS



THE European Union confirmed its worldwide ban on the export of British beef and its by-products yesterday but offered financial help for British farmers provided that the Government came up with further measures to eradicate "mad cow" disease.

Britain's two EU Commissioners joined the 18 other members of the Brussels executive in ratifying the decision of EU national officials to declare a global embargo on any beef leaving Britain for human consumption, whether as meat or in products such as confectionery, medicine or lipstick. Milk and other dairy products were not affected. No member state has ever been forced by fellow EU members to take such action against its own wishes.

Franz Fischler, the EU farm commissioner, said the confirmed ban was vital to restore confidence. It was futile to talk about scientific fact or evidence, he said. However, Herr Fischler added: "These measures are not set in stone forever. They will apply until the necessary steps are taken [by Britain]." The Veterinary Committee which voted the measures on Monday would be convened again in six weeks.

The comments, made in a speech to the European Parliament, reflected the anger in the Commission and in other member states towards what is seen as the Government's misreading of the emergency. Herr Fischler complained that the Commission, which is responsible for managing agriculture in the EU, had been given only half an hour's warning ahead of the announcement last week in the House of Commons. Last weekend he wrote a strong letter of complaint to Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister.

The battle of wills pitting Britain against the Commission and the EU's national

take action to lighten the financial burden on British producers. The Commission would "consider any means of assisting the UK in either a technical and/or financial way on the basis of a UK proposal," it said. Farmers would also benefit from the EU's market support mechanisms. This was the first confirmation that British beef slaughtered to eradicate BSE would qualify for the subsidies paid through the common agricultural policy to maintain beef prices.

Commission officials said special measures would be necessary to transfer funds for compensating Britain from the Union's coffers. Only about £55 million is allocated for disease eradication and this has been exhausted.

Sir Leon Brittan, one of the British Commissioners, won the agreement from the Commission to make available EU funds for compensation in return for approving the ban along with his colleagues, officials said. Sir Leon drafted the text committing the commission to recommending the use of union resources once a package of measures had been agreed with the British Government.

Herr Fischler said: "It is not our objective to isolate the United Kingdom for as long as possible. These are emergency measures that will last as long as necessary."

Herr Fischler said the chief aim at the moment was to prevent a market collapse in other member states. Controls would be strictly enforced, although this would not go as far as confiscating lipsticks from travellers crossing the Channel. Commission officials would visit the UK to inspect the eradication programme, he contended. The ban would be maintained as long as a threat remained.

EUROPE

farm authorities has cast a shadow over tomorrow's one-day summit of EU leaders in Turin to launch the inter-governmental conference revising the Maastricht treaty. Under the ban, Britain must report every fortnight on progress in tackling BSE, and a committee would be set up under Professor Charles Weissmann, a prominent Swiss specialist in BSE, to monitor the situation. The Commission urged Britain to take further steps. Officials said this meant that the Government was expected to order the slaughter of cattle as quickly as possible.

In return, the EU would

Farmer's fury

A French farmer whose herd of 110 cattle is to be slaughtered after one of his cows was found to have BSE grabbed a British reporter by the hair yesterday when asked how he felt. "You English bastard, you give my cows BSE then you want to know how I feel," he belched. Georges Hourman, who farms at Plouarach, Brittany, claims that his cows were infected by feed imported from Britain.

William Rees-Mogg, page 20
Letters, page 21



Dorothy Churchill and her son Stephen, who died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease

Victim's family demand an apology from Dorrell

BY MICHAEL HORNSEY
AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE family of Stephen Churchill, who died last year from a brain condition since linked to "mad cow" disease, have written to the Health Secretary to express their shock at remarks he made in a radio programme.

Dorothy and David Churchill, Stephen's parents, and his sister, Helen, 21, told Stephen Dorrell: "It is with an overpowering sense of disgust that we are forced to write to you regarding your offensive remarks made publicly. That you should have the effrontery to query if the British public are going mad, rather than the cows, must rate as your most crass statement ever. We demand a public

apology for the offence caused and reiterate our call for a public and independent inquiry into these matters."

Mr Dorrell made the remarks during an appearance on *Call Nick Ross* on BBC Radio 4 on Tuesday, in response to a barrage of criticism from callers, many of them mothers of young children.

He said: "I agree with *The Sun* this morning, which says it isn't the cows that are mad, it's the people. What the people have to do, what all of us have to do, is step back from the hysteria and believe the facts."

Mrs Churchill, from Devizes, Wiltshire, said yesterday: "Words failed me

when I heard that. We were all deeply shocked by it, as we're all of our friends and neighbours."

A statement issued last night by the Department of Health said: "Mr Dorrell has great sympathy for Stephen Churchill's parents. He was replying to a query about the *Sun* editorial and making the point that he agreed with *The Sun* that public hysteria about the possible link between BSE and CJD was out of all proportion to the risk and the scientific evidence."

Stephen Churchill died on May 21 last year, a month after his nineteenth birthday. Scientists have since identified him as one of ten victims of a new strain of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease likely to have been caused by eating meat infected with BSE.

MAD COW DISEASE 9

Ministers face questions from all sides over BSE policy

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS and their advisers faced four hours of questioning from MPs yesterday on the background and implications of the BSE scare.

The Commons Agriculture and Health Select Committees called Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, and Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, to give details of government policy. Also among the witnesses were Keith Meldrum, the Chief Veterinary Officer, and Professor John Pattison, chairman of Seac, the BSE advisory committee. The following are some of the exchanges.

At the start Mr Dorrell said: "Yesterday the argument moved on. The best available evidence demonstrates that British beef and beef products can be safely eaten both here and around the world. The issue is no longer a question of the safety of British beef. The question now is a matter of consumer confidence."

Edward Leigh, Tory MP and a member of the agriculture committee: "We are faced with a crisis of confidence in a great British industry. What policy options is the Government considering? What is the cost and what is the purpose of such policies? We have had various proposals, not least what seems to be a very sensible one of dairy cows coming to the end of their lives being bought by the Government."

Mr Hogg: "There is no recommendation from Seac for any kind of policy which involves slaughter. Seac haven't recommended that we take out of the human food chain the older cow."

"The core of National Farmers' Union proposals is that 30-month-old cows should not enter the food chain. Seac has considered the question of the older cow and recommended that . . . the older cow can be sold into the food chain but in a deboned state. That is where

the scientific evidence and recommendations rests."

Sir Jerry Wiggin, Tory chairman of the agriculture committee, asked Professor Pattison: "Would you not agree that the likelihood of BSE-infected food appearing on the dinner plate is as near zero as is humanly possible?" Professor Pattison: "I believe that is now the case."

David Congdon, Tory member of the health committee: "Can't anyone make some sort of assessment as to what extremely low [risk] is? Is it one in a million, one in ten million?" Professor Pattison: "Everyone in the land would be grateful if we could put a figure of one in 100 million on it. If you have a small risk it can actually multiply up to a large number of cases . . . if everyone in the country ate an average amount of beef you might not get one case."

John Marshall, Tory member of the health committee: "Is there not a danger of a British industry being sold down the river by individuals who pretend there is a problem in Britain and no problem anywhere else in the world?" Keith Meldrum: "The extent to which there is under-reporting is hard to determine. It is fair to say that the problem in the UK is significantly greater than in other countries."

Dale Campbell-Savours, Labour member of the agriculture committee, referred to withdrawal of public money from a scientist researching BSE: "There has been an effective attempt to undermine work that was being done, because it didn't suit ministers." Mr Dorrell: "It is a grotesque misrepresentation of the Government's position to suggest that the Department of Health should not be interested in pursuing any course that is going to deliver better understanding of a threat to human health."

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'Pre-eminence of A levels has led to expansion beyond the purpose for which they were created'

Dearing calls for tougher exams to stretch high flyers

BY JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

STANDARDS

HIGH-FLYING students will be encouraged to take revitalised S levels, or even parts of university courses, under Sir Ron Dearing's plans to stretch sixth-formers.

Sir Ron's *Review of Qualifications for 16 to 19-year-olds* calls for A levels to be made more difficult in a range of subjects, including English and business studies. Independent research had shown standards were uneven and "levelling up" should take place over a five-year period.

Examination boards will be required to monitor standards over time. Restrictions will be placed on the development of modular A levels, which have shown significantly higher pass rates than traditional examination-based courses.

Those who still find A level pitched below their natural ability will be offered Special Papers (S levels) or units from degree courses. S levels have been in decline for many years because they do not count towards university entrance.

Sir Ron proposes that revamped Special Papers should be based on A-level syllabuses, testing students to a higher standard. An alternative would be to set high flyers extended assignments, requiring research or in-depth exploration of a topic.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Sec-

retary, asked Sir Ron to ensure that the rigour of A levels was maintained when she commissioned his inquiry almost a year ago. His report says that changes within subjects and a shortage of archive material make it difficult to pronounce accurately on claims that standards have been slipping in recent years.

He says that, as the Government's academic "gold standard", A levels have stood the test of time. But the examination was established 45 years ago to select an elite for higher education, and too many students not suited to academic study were now starting courses and dropping out.

The historic pre-eminence of A levels has led to their expansion beyond the purpose for which they were created," his report says. The new examinations structure should encourage many students to take applied or vocational courses instead.

Sir Ron sees the proliferation of A-level syllabuses as a possible threat to standards, as schools switch between examination boards to find the easiest. Decisions for schools and colleges to change boards should be taken by heads and principals under formal procedures and regulatory bodies should encourage a reduction in the number of syllabuses.

Students taking modular

courses, who are able to improve their grades by re-taking examinations, should be limited in the number of times they can retake units. Final examinations should account for a minimum of 30 per cent of the marks.

In the future, traditional and modular A levels could be unified, with "final" exams covering the whole of a two-year course.

Sir Ron acknowledged that particular concerns have been raised about the drop in mathematics and science entries at A level. Academics have complained that A-level mathematics now leaves out so many "difficult" topics that they have to give many new undergraduates remedial lessons.

The report recommends new GCSE additional mathematics courses to narrow the gap to A level. Government regulatory bodies should consult examining boards about enlarging the mandatory core of both science and mathematics A levels, so that more topics would be covered by every student.

Education, page 17
Leading article, page 21



A-level students at work yesterday at Tiffin girls' school in Kingston upon Thames

Vocational study could ease plight of disaffected

BY DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of teenagers failing to achieve the lowest level of academic success at school should try vocational study in a college or the workplace, yesterday's report recommended.

Sir Ron Dearing, who left school at 16 with few qualifications, has been particularly struck by the plight of the thousands who leave school unqualified and disaffected every year. He said school should remain the centre of education up to the age of 16 but from 14 the disenchanted and other low achievers should have regular sessions in different environments to see if they can be motivated.

Sir Ron said it was a matter of national concern that more than 40,000 16-year-olds, 8 per cent of the year group, leave school every year without the lowest academic qualification to their name, a grade G at GCSE. In 1994, nearly 80,000 in English and 90,000 in mathematics did not get a grade G, the level expected of the average 11-year-old.

His proposed new structure of National Levels embracing all qualifications represents the three existing tiers but adds a foothold for those not recording any success. Sir Ron

LOW ACHIEVERS

rejected extending the GCSE ladder below grade G (to H, I, etc) and is instead calling on schools and colleges to develop a range of Entry-level qualifications, aimed lower than anything on offer at present.

Sir Ron said: "Some 20 per cent of our young people do not achieve a qualification in both the core subjects of English and mathematics, and that clouds their whole future. To encourage, motivate and recognise the achievement of such young people must be a major objective."

The priority for Entry level would be to recognise communication, numeracy and information technology. Scales used to assess 11-year-olds could form the basis of Entry level criteria.

Sir Ron added that teenagers who play truant or have lost interest in school may respond to the "more adult environment" of a further education college. He wants schools to link with colleges to create education programmes for low achievers.

The Association for Colleges welcomed the report and said its members would work with schools, provided disenchanted teenagers were not "dumped" on them.

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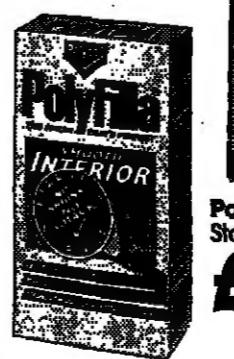


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دكتور الحسين

Candidates and employers welcome reforms and say courses fail to prepare students for A levels

Sixth-form pupils say GCSEs are too easy

By DAVID CHARTER

STUDENTS criticised GCSEs as too easy in a survey of 16 to 19-year-olds conducted for Sir Ron Dearing's review. It also showed that many A-level students would prefer continuous assessment, rather than all examinations coming at the end of their courses.

There has been little acceptance of advanced GNVQs by pupils aiming for university, and many doubted the relevance of A levels for later life.

The GCSE, which replaced O levels in 1986, was responsible for some students dropping out of A levels because GCSEs had not prepared them adequately. Overall, 85 per cent of A-level students described their courses as "much harder" than GCSEs.

One university student commented: "At GCSE you don't have to do very much at all. You can spend the best part of 18 months just sitting in lessons talking to people and writing down whatever is put in front of you." Other stu-

STUDENT VIEW

dents criticised the lack of depth in the combined science GCSE, which merges physics, chemistry and biology into a "double award" qualification. They said that those planning to take science A levels should be advised to take separate subjects at GCSE and called for an increase in the coverage and depth of all GCSEs.

A-level students were critical of the system in which all examinations came at the end of their courses. They and GNVQ students favoured a modular structure in which different sections of courses are assessed at regular intervals by testing or coursework.

Another drawback with A levels was felt to be the way in which they restricted the choice of university courses. Their narrow focus could also mean a difficult transition to new subjects at degree level.

These points were particularly emphasised by high achievers. One typical com-



Jane de Smet, head of Henriette Barnett School, north London:



Tony Webb, Confederation of British Industry director of education and training:



Kate Orebmann, the Marks & Spencer manager of recruitment:



Jon Ashworth, London School of Economics Vice-Chancellor:

"I welcome the reforms, particularly the horizontal AS levels with an exam at the end of year 12. Doing four subjects, which the students are not forced to continue, is a great opportunity for breadth and a strong motivating factor. But it is the S levels I have reservations about: they are very demanding and if they require additional teaching it might be impossible to find staff. My budget certainly wouldn't allow that."

ment was: "The A-level curriculum is not broad enough in that it is good to stretch students and it is also good to provide students with a range of non-curriculum activities." Seventeen per cent of the A-level students questioned said they would have liked a greater number of subjects but in less detail.

The survey also showed that the introduction of advanced GNVQs as a means of entry to

"widening the choice of subjects and relating them more to the world outside academia is a good thing. Teamwork is important and students practise it at GCSE level and at university. So far A levels have been an anomaly in the middle. The changes proposed would seem to address some of that. But while S levels might be suitable to some, there is more to gain from a university education than academic knowledge."

"I took two S levels myself so I must be in favour of them, though I enjoyed them and they were very useful when I started university. But one mustn't forget that universities are very different from schools. I see no reason in principle why applied A levels shouldn't be good enough to go on to university. It all depends on the nature of the university course. Some institutions will be very interested in this, particularly the technological universities."

some universities has had limited impact. One third of GNVQ candidates were aiming for university, compared with 82 per cent of A-level students. Four fifths of A-level students surveyed had five or more A to C grades at GCSE, compared with one third of GNVQ students.

Four out of ten A-level students said that they would recommend their course because it was interesting,

compared with 33 per cent of GNVQ candidates. GNVQ students were much more likely than A-level students to have had work experience included in their course. All students agreed that "core skills" were useful, placing communication top, followed by teamwork and "skills for work". Only one in five saw foreign languages as a worthwhile skill.

The survey covered more

than 150 schools and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It also showed that students were nearly three times as likely to find their choice of course restricted in small sixth forms or colleges than they were at bigger institutions. More than half of all A-level and GNVQ students said their choice of course was influenced by a careers officer or teacher, rather than by friends or family.

Revolution may fail to smash class barriers

COMMENTARY

Vocational qualifications, for example, will not follow the same rules as the academic variety, where coursework is limited and there are restrictions on modular courses. Although a new points system should give them equal currency for university entrance, admissions tutors will not necessarily agree.

The Government's chief curriculum adviser started from the premise that young people in Britain were studying too narrowly and achieving too little. His eight-volume report ranges far beyond the familiar territory of the traditional sixth form into training and even courses for disaffected pupils.

By creating a single framework covering both academic and vocational courses, Sir Ron hopes to raise standards and unlock potential among those ill-served by existing programmes.

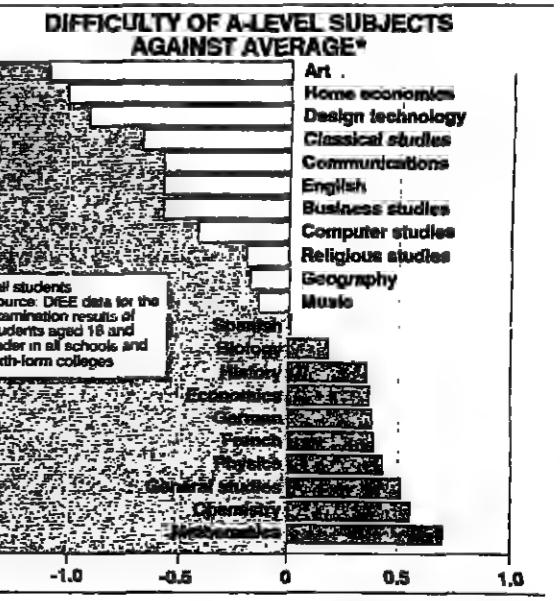
Sir Ron was asked to square the circle of maintaining the "gold standard" of A levels while encouraging greater breadth of study after 16 and further developing vocational qualifications. Seasoned Dearing-watchers will recognise some of the techniques he has used to carry off the trick.

Government and Opposition support most of the recommendations. Teachers' organisations and business leaders were also largely supportive yesterday.

There is something in the report for all of them: tougher A levels and a revival of the S level for critics of standards, a more prestigious name and a single framework of qualifications for the vocational courses lobby, reformed AS levels and an all-embracing National Advanced Diploma for those most concerned about breadth of study. But some will see contradictions.

The new applied A levels (hitherto General National)

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دُكَّانُ الْأَحْمَلِ



Schweitzer: prominent in militia movement

Secessionist gunmen defy US justice as FBI closes in on ranch

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

DAWN on the high, snow-touched plains of Montana yesterday found 100 FBI agents crouched in surveillance positions outside a remote ranch. Inside the compound are an estimated 20 members of the "Freemen", a heavily armed militia group which does not accept the legitimacy of the United States and has refused to surrender to police. The stakeout entered its third day

after the arrest on Monday of the militia's two leaders. In a federal courthouse in the nearest city, Billings, the men, LeRoy Schweitzer and Daniel Petersen Jr, shouted insults and demanded that they be tried in their own self-styled "country" of "Justus Township".

For the FBI agents at the 960-acre ranch in Garfield County, meanwhile, came chilling rumours that militia groups from other parts of the United States may be heading towards Montana, like stampeding

bison, to "monitor" the siege and "ensure" there is no repeat of the violence that ended the six-week stand-off at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, in 1993.

Federal officials are anxious to prevent violence and Sherry Matteucci, a lawyer, made a televised appeal to militia members, who are said to include women and children. "We intend you no harm," she said. "Our goal is for you to come in peacefully."

The police prevented access to the

Freemen's ranch, which is about 20 miles from the village of Jordan (population: 450), and aircraft were forbidden to fly over the area. Until November the farm was owned by two brothers who belonged to the militia. Ralph and Emmett Clark, but they lost it to a bank. The new owners want to move in to start spring planting. Their complaints finally forced the police to take action.

So threatened by the Freemen

have Jordan villagers been feeling that they had considered starting a vigilante group to "get trained, get arms and go in and do it", according to Tom Stanton, 59, who owns a neighbouring plot of land. Reporters who tried to approach Justus Township were abused. A Polish reporter said he was shot at, and an ABC television crew was relieved of \$66,000 (£42,000) in equipment.

Louanne Biggerstaff, a local woman who knew LeRoy Schweitzer at school, recalled a boy who even then showed "a lot of inspira-

MUSEO DEL PRADO/BRIDGEMAN

British hitch-hiker tells murder trial of battle to escape

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

A BRITON described yesterday how he dodged bullets and ran for his life when an Australian roadworker accused of killing seven tourists opened fire. He escaped only after struggling from the grasp of the alleged murderer and throwing himself in front of a passing vehicle.

Paul Onions, 29, is the only known survivor of the man accused of carrying out the "backpacker murders". He told the Supreme Court in Sydney that he was hitch-hiking alone six years ago when Ivan Milat picked him up near the entrance to the Belanglo State Forest, where the remains of his seven alleged victims were found.

Mr Onions, from Willenhall, West Midlands, said he found himself staring in disbelief when Mr Milat pulled out a gun. "The main thing I remember was the copper tips of the bullets in the chamber, so I knew it was real. The gun was pointing straight at me. I could feel my voice shaking, I couldn't believe it. I said, 'Calm down, what's the problem?' He said, 'This is a robbery.'

Mr Onions said the driver then produced a rope. "That scared me more than the gun."

Mr Onions leapt out of the vehicle and started to run as Mr Milat shouted that he would shoot. "I heard the gun go off and I started dodging and weaving."

His attacker pursued him, Mr Onions said, wrestling him to the ground on the central reservation of the motorway as cars drove past. Some motorists slowed down, before accelerating away. "I was just about to give up. He was holding on to my shirt and I tried to free myself. I thought this is my last chance, I've got to get away now."

Mr Onions said he struggled free and threw himself in front of a van, forcing it to stop. He opened the door and jumped in, telling the frightened woman driver: "She drove him to a nearby police station.

Mr Onions said he remembered his attacker had a moustache, of the style made famous by the former Australian Test cricketer Merv Hughes, "dark squinty eyes" and a stupid grin. Asked by the prosecution if the man was in court, Mr Onions turned and motioned at the defendant, sitting a few feet away.

It emerged yesterday that detectives had waited five

months before following up a telephone call Mr Onions, an engineer, had made to New South Wales police in November 1993. He had telephoned them from England after the discovery of the bodies of two young British women and wanted to remind police of his encounter. It was not until April 1994 that an officer contacted him. A few weeks later Mr Onions was flown to Sydney where he identified Mr Milat from a videotape.

Mr Milat, 51, has denied the murder of the seven hitch-hikers, including Joanne Walters, of Maesteg, and Caroline Clarke, of Surrey. All had been killed with a gun or knife. Mr Milat also denies kidnapping Mr Onions.

Earlier, Mr Milat's sister-in-law had admitted in court that she altered the date on a photograph to the weekend the two British women disappeared. The picture of Mr Milat on a camping holiday was originally dated Easter 1991, but Carolyne Milat changed the date to Easter 1992.

She denied she had altered the date after her brother-in-law was arrested. "Did you do it to provide an alibi for him?" Mark Tedeschini, for the prosecution, asked. "Definitely not," she replied. Mrs Milat, who is married to one of the defendant's brothers, William, claimed it was a mistake.

Mrs Milat told the court that her brother-in-law had been at a family gathering at his mother's house on Boxing Day 1991 when another two of his alleged victims, Anja Habsch and Gabor Neugebauer, were last seen alive.

She said she remembered Ivan urging one of the children to fire a water pistol at her when she arrived at the front door. Mrs Milat said her husband and other members of the family were also there.

As the witness left the court, a man accompanying her kicked and punched a newspaper photographer. The case continues.

Goya's *Third of May, 1808*, in which the painter depicted the execution of royalist rebels in Madrid during the Napoleonic wars in Spain

Spain's year of Goya to be given a royal send-off

FROM EDWARD OWEN
IN MADRID

KING JUAN CARLOS and Queen Sofia of Spain will open the Goya exhibition at Madrid's Prado art museum today at the start of national celebrations to mark the 250th anniversary of the Spanish painter's birth. The Spanish ministries responsible

for culture and tourism have formed a state company, Goya 96, to promote the anniversary.

More than £3 million will be spent on 16 exhibitions, five congresses, a film, a ballet, a play and an opera, all dedicated to aspects of Goya's life. The federal bank, Argentaria, is sponsoring the events. Tickets to the Prado exhibition, which will last until June 2,

cost 1,000 pesetas (£5). Until recently it was difficult to obtain tickets for important cultural events in Spain, so a new telephone reservation and credit card payment service has been widely welcomed. So far, 4,000 tickets have been sold.

Several luxury hotels are offering a package with goyesco entertainments, such as dining in one of old Madrid's

mesones, where the painter enjoyed Castilian roast lamb and sucking pig, or attending a *goyesco corrida*, a traditional-style bullfight, a spectacle frequently portrayed by Goya.

The Prado's Goya collection has been supplemented by 30 works from around the world, many returning to Spain for the first time.

Presidents vow to help each other

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton and President Yeltsin agreed earlier this month to give each other political support before the approaching American and Russian presidential elections.

Mr Clinton told Mr Yeltsin he "wanted to make sure that everything the United States did would have a positive impact and nothing should have a negative impact", according to a classified account of their meeting at the recent anti-terrorism summit in Egypt, leaked to yesterday's *Washington Times*.

"The main thing is that the two sides not do anything that would harm the other," Mr Clinton told Mr Yeltsin. "Things could come up between now and the elections in Russia or the United States which could cause conflicts."

The White House acknowledged the quotes were accurate but questioned their interpretation.

On a lighter note, Mr Yeltsin proposed providing

Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, with a "young attractive instructor" to teach him Russian. Mr Clinton agreed that such a move would certainly change Mr Christopher's image.

Meanwhile in Washington, Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan continued to plague Bob Dole after he claimed the Republican presidential nomination following an overwhelming victory in the California primary.

Mr Perot embarked on a national speaking tour to promote his new Reform Party, which threatens to split the anti-Clinton vote and ensure the President's re-election.

Mr Buchanan today meets nearly 50 top supporters at his home in the wealthy Washington suburb of McLean to compile a list of demands dubbed the "McLean Manifesto". He has left open the possibility of running as an independent and further fragmenting the Republican vote if these demands are ignored.

Nixon tapes reveal dirty tricks

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

MORE than 3,000 hours of Richard Nixon's secretly recorded tapes, covering White House dirty tricks and his historic dealings with China and the Soviet Union, will be

released under an agreement between the Justice Department, the National Archives and his executors.

The tapes represent a treasure trove for historians in search of a greater understanding of Nixon's ability to establish detente with Mos-

cow and an opening to Peking while also conducting high crimes against his political foes. The first 200 hours of the recordings will focus on the web of illegal acts connected with the Watergate scandal, including misuse of the FBI and the CIA.

Satirists leap on Dole's third party rhetoric

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AT his party in Washington to celebrate clinching the Republican presidential nomination, Bob Dole declared that the battle for America's future had begun, adding: "That's where Bob Dole will lead us."

Mark it up as another example of Mr Dole's Third Personspeak — a recurring idiosyncrasy. He often sums up his stump speeches with the remark: "That's what Bob Dole is all about."

Pat Buchanan has also fallen into Third Personspeak, which is becoming a rich vein for mimicry and ridicule.

National Public Radio challenged listeners to furnish quotations where similar self-references would have ruined the whole effect.

A few of the early favourites: "Frankly, my dear, Rhei Butler doesn't give a damn."

"How does Elizabeth Bar-

rett Browning love thee? Let Elizabeth Barrett Browning count the ways."

Then there is: "John Lennon is the walrus."

From *Moby Dick*: "Call Ishmael, Ishmael."

Then there were: "Winston Churchill has nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

That's one small step for Neil Armstrong, one giant leap for mankind."

From *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It is a far, far better thing that Sydney Carton does than Sydney Carton has ever done."

And: "Claudius, Claudius."

Richard Nixon was the first modern exponent of political Third Personspeak. After losing the 1962 California governor's race he told reporters, wrongly as it turned out: "You won't have Nixon to kick around any more."

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Farm crisis drives Britain towards European fold

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

A WEEK of Europe-wide convulsions over "mad cow disease" has cast a harsh new light on tomorrow's European Union summit in Turin, an event intended to set a serene tone for the Maastricht review conference.

The BSE crisis has pushed John Major to the centre of the stage, where he will receive the sympathies of his continental colleagues, with a little lecturing on the blessings of "solidarity".

President Chirac set the tone yesterday with a call to the French Cabinet to support Britain in its hour of need and to give generously when compensating British farmers. Philippe Vasseur, the Farming Minister, spelt out what France expects for helping Mr



TURIN SUMMIT

Major. Britain, he said, must return the favour over the "unfair" benefits it obtains from the depreciating pound. Britain's alleged abuse of "competitive devaluation" is France's main complaint against London as Paris keeps its franc strong ahead of monetary union.

However, the beef crisis has offered a parable in what is

right and wrong in the European enterprise as it embarks on reform for the next century. According to some senior diplomats and officials in Brussels, it has also provided a chance to bring Britain closer to its neighbours. A demonstration of EU generosity towards British farmers could dim the EU's demon status in the eyes of many Britons.

The general view is that the British Government has mishandled the emergency, requiring other members, through the Commission, to step in with their own quarantine and calls for slaughter.

That view was summed up by Belgium's *Le Soir* yesterday. The country which endlessly lectured its partners on the horrors of the common agricultural policy now expects to be bailed out from Brussels, the paper said.

In Germany, a tone of weary resignation has flooded the editorial columns. Klaus Kinkel, the Foreign Minister, said the BSE crisis hardly helped at a time when Britain was already planning to dig in its heels at the inter-governmental conference (IGC).

However, while the rest of Europe has been congratulating itself, the beef crisis has once again exposed all the flaws in the 15-member union that was defined by the Maastricht treaty.

The controversial singularity issue has been kept off the Turin agenda and the Italians defused another potential row by formulating a compromise over the role of MEPs in the IGC. Signora Agnelli sounded a cautious note on the extension of majority voting, saying it had to be "carefully weighed".

Signora Agnelli, 74, has won praise from European diplomats for her tireless travelling since Italy took over the EU presidency in January. She was stung by the accusation of Richard Holbrooke, the senior US envoy, that Europe had "been asleep" during the Bosnia crisis, and chaired a Balkan summit in Rome last month to put the Maastricht review.

Letters, page 21

Italians seek single voice for the EU

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THERE were increasing fears among Italian officials yesterday that tomorrow's Turin summit would be hijacked by the row between Britain and its European partners over "mad cow" disease.

Officials said Italy had hoped for a trouble-free summit to launch the inter-governmental conference on Maastricht. Susanna Agnelli, the Foreign Minister, believed EU leaders were close to an agreement on giving Europe "a single identifiable face and voice" by appointing a senior figure to represent Europe to the world.

Britain wants the powers of any representative to be limited, with foreign policy kept largely in the hands of national governments. Nor is it clear how a common defence policy could work. But officials said Signora Agnelli had forged a "warm relationship" with Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and that had helped to create a "positive mood" for Turin.

Signora Agnelli said yesterday she hoped that Turin

would launch the debate on three themes: common foreign policy, reform of institutions and the rights of citizens.

The summit had to give a "clear message" by affirming the "federal vocation" of the EU in the run-up to the summit in June.

The controversial singularity issue has been kept off the Turin agenda and the Italians defused another potential row by formulating a compromise over the role of MEPs in the IGC. Signora Agnelli sounded a cautious note on the extension of majority voting, saying it had to be "carefully weighed".

Signora Agnelli, 74, has won praise from European diplomats for her tireless travelling since Italy took over the EU presidency in January. She was stung by the accusation of Richard Holbrooke, the senior US envoy, that Europe had "been asleep" during the Bosnia crisis, and chaired a Balkan summit in Rome last month to put the Maastricht review.

Letters, page 21

Algerian militants seize 7 Trappists

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

SEVEN French Trappist monks were kidnapped from their Algerian monastery yesterday by suspected Islamic terrorists, prompting the French Government to repeat calls for all French people resident in Algeria to return home immediately.

The monks, aged between 50 and 80, were abducted from the Trappist Tibehirine monastery in the town of Medea, 50 miles south of Algiers. No ransom demand has been received, but the Government identified the kidnappers as members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most militant of the Islamic groups fighting to topple the military-backed Algerian Government.

Hervé de Charene, the French Foreign Minister, immediately said that all 8,370 French citizens still living in Algeria, as well as tens of thousands of others holding dual French-Algerian nationality, should return to France. "I can only repeat, in the gravest and most solemn way, to all French people still in Algeria... you must return."

Since September 1993, 32 French citizens have been murdered by militants in Algeria, including seven belonging to religious orders. In 1994, the GIA vowed to eradicate all "Jews, Christians and polytheists" in Algeria.

A French government spokesman said the abduction was "an odious act against a religious community".

IN MEMORY OF
ALAN FULLER
AGE 49 YEARS
SENIOR MANAGER
HERBIE FROGG
1969-1996

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125, New Bond Street passed away on 22 March 1996.
As a mark of respect all Herbie Frog Stores will be closed on Friday 29 March 1996.

Why hardship drives Russians to eat people

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

WHEN police in the Crimean city of Sebastopol were called to investigate a murder this week, nothing had prepared them for the grisly scene that unfolded during a routine search of a block of flats.

Entering the home of a former convict, the officers found the mutilated remains of human bodies being prepared for eating. The flat's owner, her mother and her boyfriend, had been stabbed to death by the 33-year-old suspect and their bodies neatly butchered. In the kitchen investigators found the internal organs of two victims in saucepans, and nearby on a plate a freshly-roasted piece of human flesh.

Although the gruesome details of the killings have stunned Sebastopol, more shocking perhaps is the growing evidence suggesting that cannibalism is not an isolated problem, but is rife in the former Soviet Union.

In the past 12 months ten people, from Siberia to St Petersburg, have been charged with killing and eating their victims. The authorities are at a loss to explain the phenomenon. Last month there were two cases of cannibalism. One man in the Siberian coal-mining town of Kemerovo was arrested after he admitted killing and cutting up a friend, and using his flesh as the filling for pelmeni, a Russian version of ravioli.

Twice last year convicts in overcrowded prisons killed and ate their cellmates because they claimed they were hungry and wanted to

relieve overcrowding. Criminal experts said that most cases of cannibalism were part of the general rise of serial killings, which have increased because police resources are so stretched by rising crime and because of Russia's mounting economic and social problems.

Andrei Tkachenko, the director of the Serbsky Psychiatric Centre in Moscow, where serial killers are sent for observation, said that in the 1980s the centre received about three or five patients a year. Now on average at least ten serial killers are sent.

"If you were to get a complete figure you would find that there are considerably more instances of serial murders in Russia now than anywhere else in the world," he told the *Moscow Times*.

Cannibalism, in particular, attempts to deal with the confrontation between rival ethnic groups in the past 11 months had been muddled and inadequate. "They play to find extremists. But what are they doing to find them? Nothing," the investigator writes.

He added that European countries in particular had shown much concern, but little action had been taken.

UN plea for Burundi

Geneva: A United Nations investigator accused the international community yesterday of playing "a game of hide and seek" with Burundi, while the country is going through a civil war that has left thousands dead (Peter Capella writes).

Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the UN special investigator on human rights in Burundi, said that international at-



The Duke inspects Krakow's only functioning synagogue with Menahem Joskovitz, the Chief Rabbi of Poland

Ex-Communists welcome the Queen

FROM ALAN HAMILTON
IN PRAGUE

CENTRAL Europe turned out in its thousands yesterday to see the Queen on her historic progress through the old Communist states, first in the late winter snow of Krakow and later in the warm spring sunshine of Prague.

However, while the rest of Europe has been congratulating itself, the beef crisis has once again exposed all the flaws in the 15-member union that was defined by the Maastricht treaty.

Instead of pulling together, as dictated by the "solidarity" preached in all the continental Euro-rhetoric, the moment the word was out on CJD, the national drawbridges were slammed shut to British beef.

As *Le Figaro* said yesterday:

"All those frontiers that were supposed to disappear suddenly sprang back and everyone tried to extract a bit of profit for himself out of the crisis."

As the EU circus was beginning to fly into Turin for the first act of the year-long negotiations, the Commission's posters unashamedly daunted news. Only 15 per cent of EU citizens were aware that the Union was about to launch its Maastricht review.

During her tour of the city's



Queen admires a doll in regional costume

historic buildings, the Queen visited the vast, dark interior of St Mary's Church and heard the truncated bugle call that is sounded every hour from its soaring spire, in memory of the medieval centurion who sounded the alarm at the approach of the invading Mongols and was shot through the neck by a Tartar in mid blow.

In the Wawel cathedral on a hill above the city, the Queen laid a wreath on the tomb of General Sikorski, the wartime Polish military leader.

The Duke of Edinburgh toured Krakow's former Jewish ghetto, still much as it was in pre-war days and used for the re-enactment of scenes in the film *Schindler's List*.

Wearing the regulation

kippah (black skullcap), he inspected the city's only remaining working synagogue, and saw an exhibition of a restoration project on some of the area's historic buildings being carried out with help from Edinburgh City Council.

What has changed in the ghetto is the population. Before the Nazi occupation, Krakow was home to 70,000 Jews. Such was the efficiency of ethnic cleansing that today

there are barely 200.

Later in the day, the Queen flew to the Czech Republic, where again she is the first British reigning monarch to pay a state visit. She was welcomed at Prague Castle by the recently widowed President, Vaclav Havel.

The ceremonies of welcome

over, the President took the Queen for a walk in the late afternoon sun across the Charles Bridge, one of Prague's great architectural monuments, where another crowd of thousands offered warm applause to their rare royal visitor.

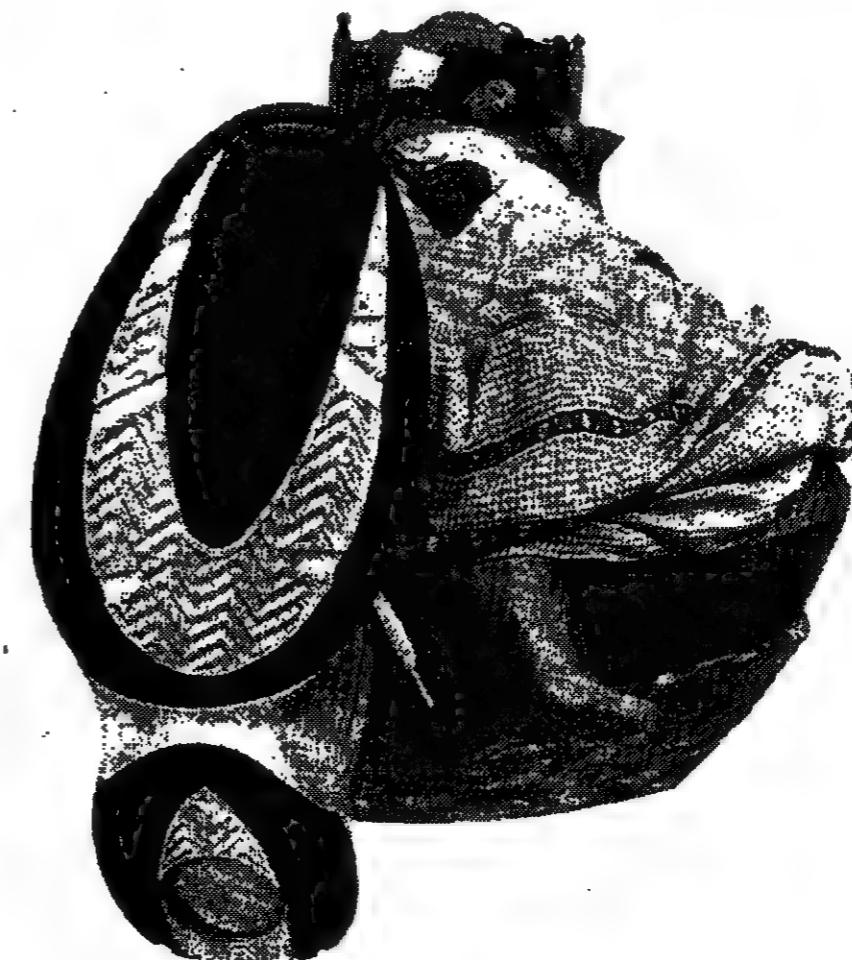
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WORLD SUMMARY

Robber of royal gems faces jail

New York: A baggage handler at New York airport has pleaded guilty to stealing diamond jewellery from the Duchess of York's luggage. Gilbert Terreno, 20, of Brooklyn, faces up to 18 months in prison (Quentin Letts writes).

The disappearance of the jewels on December 4, which included a necklace given to the Duchess by the Queen as a wedding present in 1986, created international headlines. Terreno, who had no idea of the owner of the gems, had taken some of the jewels to his family home in Brooklyn's Ozone Park, while others were found in his locker at work.

Woman named 3-star general

New York: America's armed forces have nominated their first female three-star general (Quentin Letts writes). Carol Mutter, 50, a major-general in the Marines, has been recommended for promotion to lieutenant-general. The Senate is not expected to object.

General Mutter will be the only woman among 108 three-star generals. One of the first to congratulate her was her husband, James, a retired Marines colonel.

Okinawa leader shuns US bases

Tokyo: The Governor of Okinawa said he would refuse to obey a court order to sign documents renewing leases for US military bases on the island and said he would appeal. Governor Masahide Ono's refusal will force Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Japanese Prime Minister, to sign the leases instead. (Reuters)

Afghans hurt in munitions blast

Kabul: Twenty-five Afghan United Nations mine-clearing experts were injured when a blast ripped through a Taliban munitions dump in the militia's southern stronghold of Kandahar, sources said. The cause of the explosion is unknown. (AFP)

Patten denounces Peking's plan for parallel rule

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

CHRIS PATTEN, the Governor of Hong Kong, yesterday rejected Chinese proposals to set up a second legislature here, to extract a loyalty pledge from the Civil Service, and to sideline the Governor, all before the 1997 handover of the colony.

China's newest blow to the colony, after Peking's humiliation in the Taiwan elections, was the suggestion that, once China has picked the members of a Provisional Legislative Council, which will sit concurrently with the wholly elected one, and designated a chief executive to replace Mr Patten on July 1, 1997, "Mr Patten will inevitably become a loner". The idea

was mooted by an "official", reliably reported to be Lu Ping, head of the State Council's China and Macau Affairs Office. The official also said that, after the chief executive has appointed his senior officials from among serving senior civil servants here, "it will be impossible for those officials to work under Mr Patten in the morning and under the instruction of the chief executive in the afternoon. I have to ask Mr Patten how the British-Hong Kong Government will operate. I do not know how Mr Patten can pass his days in the final stage."

This appears to be a violation of the 1984 British-Chi-

nese treaty, which states that the British Government will exercise full authority in the colony until its flag is lowered. The official also affirmed what his deputy had said, that senior civil servants would have to be loyal to the provisional legislature. This will force them to choose between Peking's orders and the policy of the Hong Kong Government, which denies the legitimacy of the Provisional Legislative Council, which will come into being at least six months before the handover. It will number among its hand-picked members 14 of those elected last year to the present council, which China says it will abolish on July 1, 1997. There will then be two councils and two de facto Governors in place.

Mr Patten said in response to the Chinese threats: "Government is not something you can turn on and off like an electric kettle. Government goes on. We have a politically neutral Civil Service." It would serve its present master loyally, Mr Patten said, and subsequently the post-1997 government. "Anyone who does not understand that, does not understand the nature of a free society under the rule of law."

It has already been suggested here that John Major should implement his guarantee, given during his recent trip to Hong Kong, that if the colony's liberty appears to be threatened by its future sovereign Britain would seek international legal redress.

■ Singapore: Hong Kong will remain the main port for Vietnam, often on the grounds that they are not genuine Vietnamese, and are being held without trial.

Mr Belfoff said there was "no realistic prospect of release" for many camp inmates, and that they must be set free unless the Government can show why their detention should continue.

Hong Kong now acts as the world port for China, particularly for Guangdong. "The question is, will Hong Kong remain the main port for southern China as other ports in the area are developed. Our assessment is that it will," he told a ports conference. (AFP)

Colony criticised by Privy Council

BY JONATHAN MIRSKY

THE Privy Council yesterday branded the Hong Kong Government's treatment of four Vietnamese boatpeople "an affront" to civilised standards, ordering the immediate release of the one left in custody.

The reaction to the statement by Michael Belfoff, QC, who held that "the right to liberty is second only to the right to life itself", will revive what has been Hong Kong's most bitter domestic political issue, and will weaken the Government's claim that it is a beacon of legality and human rights.

The ruling concerns four Vietnamese who have been denied refugee status, one of whom has been detained for six years. The four fled here with papers from the Taiwan Government, claiming that Hanoi denied them citizenship and seeking recognition as political refugees.

Many Hong Kong people may find themselves seeking refugee status in less than two years. However, most resent the fact that the colony has been forced to support the boatpeople. The United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees has steadily lost touch with the camps and the Government has been left with the task of forcing their repatriation to an uncooperative Vietnam.

The boatpeople now number 20,000 after the often reluctant repatriation of more than 46,000 others. Paul Baker, a British lawyer who has long defended them, said the decision would have profound significance for many others in the camps, some of whom have been detained for more than 15 years.

The Privy Council noted that at least 400 boatpeople have been refused re-entry to Vietnam, often on the grounds that they are not genuine Vietnamese, and are being held without trial.

Mr Belfoff said there was "no realistic prospect of release" for many camp inmates, and that they must be set free unless the Government can show why their detention should continue.

Peking has emphasised repeatedly that it wants the Vietnamese repatriated or sent to other countries before China resumes control.



Yigal Amir, flanked by policemen, being escorted into court yesterday for sentencing

Killer of Rabin harangues court after life sentence

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

YIGAL AMIR, 25, was sentenced yesterday for the pre-meditated murder of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, whom he assassinated last November in a religiously inspired attempt to derail the peace process with the Palestinians. Amir showed no remorse when the life sentence was read out.

Conspiracy theories that surround the controversial killing are likely to be heightened today when a 308-page report by the State Commission of Inquiry on the lamentable performance of Israel's security services is published. One-third of the report is classified as secret.

Judicial experts said Amir was likely to spend the rest of his life in a special cell complex for his own safety. A number of Israeli prisoners have already issued a warning that an attempt would be made to kill Amir.

Moshe Negbe, a legal expert, told Israeli radio that Amir was an unlikely candidate for a normal presidential pardon and that the additional six-year consecutive sentence he received for wounding one of Rabin's bodyguards was therefore "meaningless".

Given the huge public interest, the Tel Aviv court allowed its verdict to be broadcast live. Oded Mudrik, one of the three judges who delivered the expected verdict, said: "Behind bars and within the prison

walls, the 'mark of Cain' will be imprinted on the forehead of the accused."

Amir, an extreme right-wing former law student, showed little emotion when sentence was passed. The judges were dismissive of defence claims that he had intended only to wound Rabin, 73, rather than kill him.

Amir, flanked by police, stood confidently with hands on hips and addressed the court for about four minutes before being stopped by Edmund Levy, the chief judge, who had shown little patience with him during the trial because of his attempts to use the stand as a platform for his militant views.

In his speech, Amir also said: "Everything I did, I did for the people of Israel, for the Torah [Bible] of Israel, for the land of Israel. Whoever tries to break this link between these things will not succeed."

When Judge Levy cut him off, Mr Amir said: "May God help you." Later, as he was marched out of the packed court, he shouted: "The state of Israel is a monstrosity."

Passing sentence, Judge Levy said Amir "is unworthy of anything except pity, in that he has lost all semblance of humanity... He decided that putting the late Prime Minister to death was the last way to stop the political process which he did not like, and he followed this path to its end."

China 'staging fresh wargames'

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN TAIPEI

CHINESE troops are staging a new round of mock battles against Taiwan, despite apparent conciliatory tones between Taipei and Peking, a leading Taiwanese newspaper said yesterday.

The exercises are smaller than the ones that ended on Monday, the *United Daily News* reported in a dispatch from New York.

The manoeuvres, reportedly being held inland, were said to be less menacing than the previous exercises, which disrupted shipping in the Taiwan Strait and were seen as capable of being turned quickly

into actual attacks. The reported sources close to the Chinese military. Officials in Taiwan and China would not comment.

Yin Tsung-wen, the director of Taiwan's National Security Bureau, said yesterday that China was expected to conduct exercises on mountains and urban terrain that resembled Taiwan.

The exercises, code-named "Success 96", were reported in several cities and mountains in Fujian and Guangdong provinces. They involved troops from the 27th and 63rd legions, based in the

United States late this year, it added.

■ Peking: Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the United Nations Secretary General, who met Chinese leaders here during a four-day visit to China, said that Taiwan could never be a UN member "unless there is a change of mind in China." (James Pringle writes)

Meanwhile, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said America would face the "resolute opposition" of China and its people if Taiwan's newly elected President, Lee Teng-hui, was allowed to accept an invitation to visit the US.

Briton rejected freedom

BY LEILA LINTON
AND JONATHAN MILLER
IN BANGKOK

CHRISTOPHER HOWES, the British charity worker taken hostage in northwestern Cambodia, rejected an offer of freedom because he did not want to abandon his Cambodian colleagues.

The kidnappers, believed to be Khmer Rouge deserters, told him to go to negotiate a ransom, but Mr Howes, 36, a Falklands ex-serviceman, refused. Instead, he persuaded the bandits to release nine captives. Others escaped and the rest, except Mr Howes's interpreter, were set free later.

Roy Howes, 68, from Bristol, said he was not surprised by his son's bravery. "He is just an ordinary Englishman doing his job," he said.

Mr Howes was seized with up to 28 volunteers on Tuesday as he supervised mine-clearing. Yesterday, two Cambodian policemen were killed by landmines as they helped to search for him.

Gunman holds seven hostage

Leikenau, Germany: A gunman seized seven hostages, four of them children, in a western German village yesterday and threatened to kill them if his demands were not met, the police said.

They said the 45-year-old gunman had originally held 12 members of his own extended family captive, but it was not

immediately clear how the other five family members apparently had managed to get away.

The unnamed man from Mannheim was holding his hostages in a relation's house in Leikenau, a village in rolling hills near Koblenz, on the Rhine. He was demanding 500,000 marks (£220,000) and

the opportunity to make good his escape.

The police opened negotiations by telephone, but said an early end to the siege was not in sight. They lifted a news blackout that had been imposed after the gunman said he would kill himself and his hostages if the media reported the incident. (Reuter)

Jackson's star dims in Oscars fiasco

FROM GILES WHITELL
IN LOS ANGELES

AS HOLLYWOOD returns groggily to work, it has become clear that the only real loser on Oscar night was the Rev Jesse Jackson.

Mr Jackson's protest over the under-representation of blacks in films, which began with the revelation that only one Oscar nominee was African-American, has turned into a political damp squib and a personal humiliation.

After Whoopi Goldberg, the black actress, mocked him in front of a billion television viewers on Monday, Mr Jackson was dismissed yesterday by Patricia Turner, a professor of African-American Studies at the University of California, as "an unduly opportunistic man grasping for straws".

Mr Jackson urged California supporters to join him on Oscar night with banners and slogans outside ABC television's Los Angeles affiliate, but barely two dozen turned up. He urged the eight black celebrities appearing as presenters to wear rainbow-coloured ribbons in recognition of his Rainbow Coalition, but only the producer, Quincy Jones, did so.

Claiming in the aftermath of Hollywood's night of stars to be "at the centre of debate", Mr Jackson may have been accurate. But that debate concerns his judgment. Publicists for Ms Goldberg and Mr Jones told the *Los Angeles Times* that both considered the Oscars the wrong time and place for a protest.



Zia stopped short of tendering resignation

Zia bows to pressure for election

Dhaka: Begum Khalida Zia, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, gave in to months of pressure yesterday and asked President Biswas to set up a caretaker government to oversee fresh elections, state television said.

Earlier, senior officials told the President that they could not work from today unless the country's political crisis was resolved.

The Prime Minister reiterated her pledge to hold an election in May, it was reported. However, her move stopped short of meeting opposition demands that she resign by yesterday.

Ayubur Rahman, Bangladesh's most senior civil servant, signed a statement saying: "The administration, economy and law and order have all collapsed. As there is no obstacle to... a caretaker government, we have suggested to the President that it be formed immediately."

Opposition parties have staged a series of strikes to try to force Begum Zia to resign and call new elections under a neutral body. (Reuter)

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Women who trade faces

There are moments in life when a woman simply has to take on a new image, says Joe Joseph

When Sarah Ferguson's son's drawn, unsmiling, blanched face and kohl-rimmed eyes appeared on the front of *Hello!* this week, many people must have assumed that the world-hopping Duchess of York had volunteered to take part in some health education campaign to warn about the draining effects of multiple jetlag.

Then we found out that she had actually spent several hours with a make-up artist trying to achieve this ghostly Morticia Addams look, like those odd people who go to fancy-dress parties, amusingly kitted out as accident victims.

It's certainly not a wash-and-go style, even for someone who doesn't have to rush to work first thing in the morning. Fancy photographic techniques and possibly computer enhancement may have heightened the ashen, single-chin look.

But what makes women who, until now, have been happily photographed as mumsy girls-next-door feel they suddenly have to play the vamp? The Princess of Wales did it, famously, in front of Patrick Demarchelier's flattering lens. The Duchess of Kent called on Snowdon, and later Demarchelier, when she wanted to show new faces to the world.

Emma Thompson did it for *Vanity Fair*, and Andie MacDowell made a lunge at losing her *Saturday-night-entertainer* image by posing for *Tatler* in a way that made her look sexy, though not quite *femme fatale*.

"Quite often," says psychologist Dr Dorothy Rowe, "all of us will change something about our appearance when we feel we've moved into a new phase in our lives. It may be just a matter of getting rid of a garment or a hairstyle."

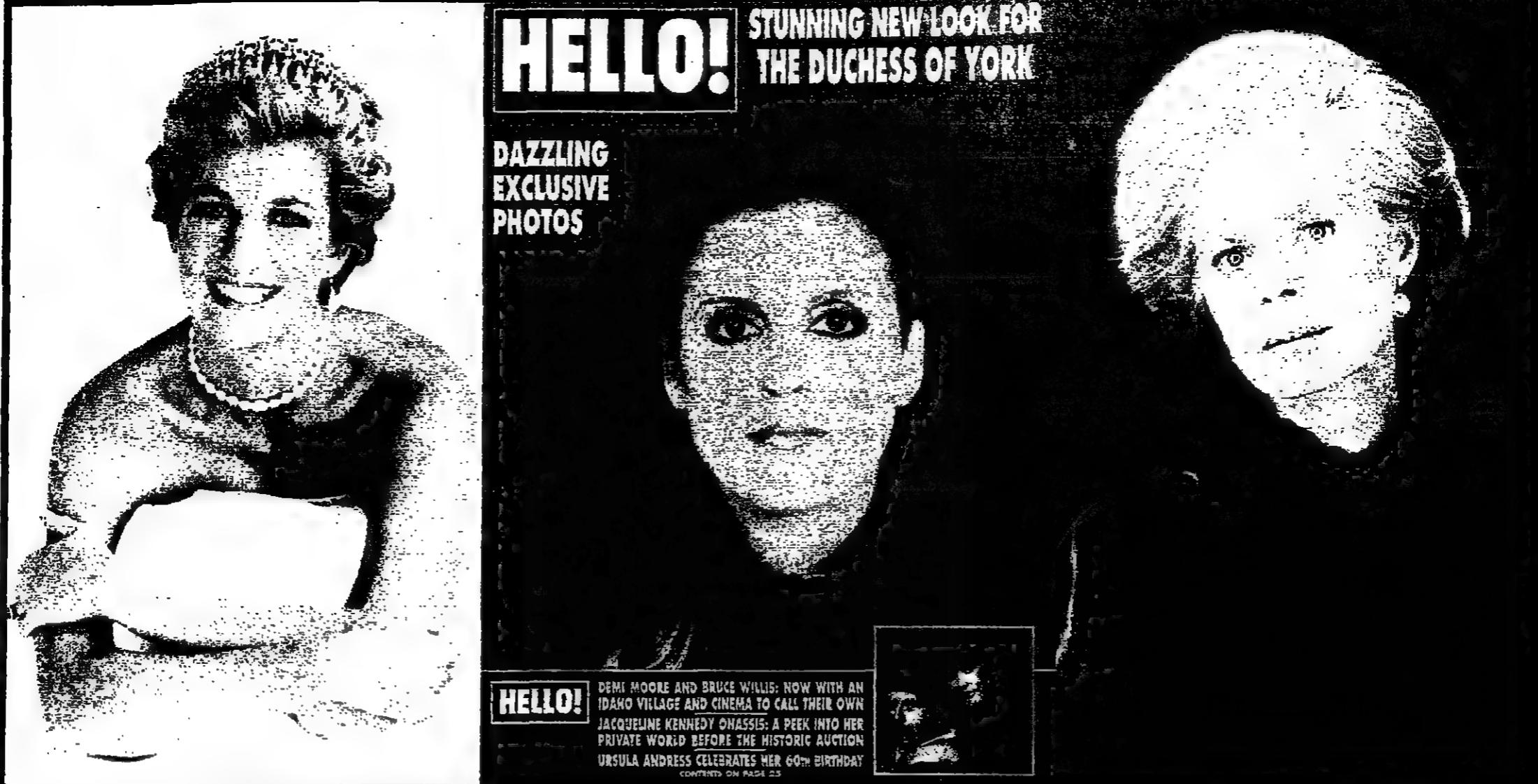
Or maybe even your senses. Dr Martin Skinner, a psychologist at Warwick University, agrees that "people do go for a completely different look when there's been some big disjunction in their lives."

TWENTY years ago, a young doctor who had just qualified, exalting in his new status, would hurry around the network of tunnels which linked the various buildings in his teaching hospital.

At the time, it would not have occurred to him that one day there would be a suspicion that the pipes running along the roof of the tunnel and lagged in flaking, ageing asbestos might be responsible for killing him.

That doctor now has a mesothelioma, a tumour which attacks the pleura, the membrane which covers both

PATRICK DEMARCHELIER



Famous makeovers: the Princess of Wales changed her image in front of Patrick Demarchelier's lens, while the Duchess of Kent called in Snowdon. The Duchess of York (centre) prefers the Morticia look

— after a breakup or when they have got a new job."

But hasn't she aped the Princess Diana *Panorama* look, with the black-rimmed eyes?

"Fergie quite often follows the Princess," Dr Rowe says. "Di works out, so does Fergie. Di uses kohl, so does Fergie."

But Diana doesn't walk around like she's just finished an eight-hour shift in a flour mill. What's the white face all about? Probably from those moody adverts in glossy women's mags for lipstick and mascara. If you squint hard enough, the restructured Fergie even has something of the pallid Marianne Faithfull about her. Borrowing looks from other women is a peculiarly female hobby. You often overhear women in hairdress-

ers asking for a Helena Christensen cut, but it's rare to see a man asking for a "Jeremy Paxman" or a "Bobby Charlton".

Makeovers in general tend to be a woman thing: you don't often come across men who say they're gonna wash that girl right outta their hair. You don't spot Stephen Dorrell going for a session of aromatherapy, or a spending spree in Bond Street boutiques, to lift his spirits and take his mind off BSE.

This may be because men tend to spend about four minutes on their daily grooming, which includes shaving and spraying cologne on yesterday's work shirt, and they can see that something like Fergie's makeover looks high-maintenance. Even if Fergie could spare seven

hours every morning to paint her face and suck her cheeks in, she would need an extra staff of four.

She would also need a thick enough skin to step out of her front door in daylight looking like a plumper version of a blanched Michael Jackson. Diana hasn't been half as ambitious in her redesign, and even she still can't do her own hair.

So what possessed Fergie? "She's had a lot of bad press recently," says Dr Skinner, "and you don't do something as dramatic as this by accident. She must have known what effect it would have, so maybe it's a signal that she is making a radical departure."

What, another one? Fergie seems to change her appearance as frequently as other people change their sheets, all the way from Sarah Shell-Suit to the latest version — Sarah Supermodel (though still not Sarah Sexy). Fergie has turned into a human pinball. Each time you think she is about to come to rest, she bounces off again like a bullet in a completely unpredictable direction.

And she usually does her dramatic makeovers in public. She has indulged *Hello!* 15 times since January 1995 alone. "It seems to me," says Dr Rowe, "she's never done anything to avoid the media. I wonder if she's one of these people who needs to be noticed? You experience your sense of existence in your relationship to other people. If you have a lot of

self-confidence, you don't need all the world to love you."

"But if you feel you don't have good, loving relationships with the people around you, and you feel you're very much on your own, and you don't feel good about yourself, and you feel that if you're not noticed you'll just disappear, then you'll do almost anything to get noticed. Fergie's been excluded from so much now. She even has to buy her own postage stamps. She's pretty isolated. The pictures are a way of saying, 'hey, I'm still here, take notice.'"

But where have all the freckles gone?

"Women often have hang-ups about freckles. You get teased about them at school and there's nothing you can do about them."

Maybe Fergie is miserable and she's covered them with white make-up.

Dr Skinner adds that "most blemishes on the face — scars, pigmentation, spots — we don't like. But freckles are somehow accepted, especially on children, though children can be self-conscious about them. You can't control freckles, so as an adult you might want to cover them up. Neil Kinnock has freckles. But a white face? It doesn't really go with red hair."

Dr Rowe points out that Fergie has debts, "and we all do all sorts of things when we need the money".

Dr Skinner scratches his head, as bemused as the rest of us by Fergie's antics: "She could have done it for a bet. Who knows?"

The side effects of ginseng are quite well-known. But few doctors would know that, for instance, hawthorn extract is a natural beta-blocker or that Pennyroyal sometimes prescribed for indigestion can be lethal.

The Pharmaceutical Press, which publishes *Martindale*, the standard textbook on drugs, has introduced *Herbal Medicine* (£30), a 300-page companion volume on herbal medicine as a guide for doctors and other health workers, covering medical and culinary uses and interaction with other drugs.

Asbestos link to lung disease and cancer □ BSE risk and children □ Side effects of plant extracts

The killer dust

the lungs and lines the inner wall of the chest cavity, thereby making a sac for the lungs to lie in.

Mesothelioma grows quickly into the lungs and produce a sticky fluid which collects in the pleural cavity.

Treatment is symptomatic, for there is no cure. The amount of exposure to asbestos which will later lead to a mesothelioma is variable, but the tumour is rare unless the exposure, even if not particularly heavy, lasts for at least six months.

The anxious doctor, always scurrying to answer one emergency call after another and therefore slightly out of breath, would probably have

inhaled fibres from the asbestos far more deeply than if he had sauntered through the underground passages and taken normal breaths.

Not all types of asbestos are harmful. But the hazards of exposure to the fibres have recently hit the headlines after Westminster City Council was accused of rehousing families in a tower block heavily contaminated by it. Now two elderly people, who developed mesothelioma after playing in the streets of Leeds with asbestos

to dust during their childhood, have been in dispute over the damages awarded to them.

A lesser trouble for patients who have been exposed to asbestos is asbestosis. This is a widespread pneumoconiosis

sis, a fibrosis of the lungs similar to that which used to develop in coal miners before the Second World War.

The fibres of asbestos are inhaled deep into the lung tissue where they trigger the fibrosis, which reduces the lungs' capacity and their ability to absorb oxygen.

As a result of the lung changes, the patient becomes increasingly breathless and is able to manage less and less physical activity.

Eventually, in some cases, respiratory failure develops. The asbestosis may also cause thickening of the pleura, which again can be associated with a fluid effusion.

Patients who have been exposed to tobacco smoke as well as asbestos fibres are particularly liable to develop both chronic bronchitis — with a persistent cough and wheezing — and one of the cancers of the lung.

more from it than did adults.

It is very possible that low resistance to the "prion" disease is genetic and that most people will have a good resistance. It is difficult to be dogmatic about children's resistance to infection because many factors can influence it. Chronic infection can reduce it and in many children aged three to six months, when the maternal resistance acquired *in utero* is wearing off, a form of immuno deficiency occurs. But the development of the defence system is only delayed and is usually normal by the age of 18 months. The problems of resistance in children to infection are complex and still not entirely understood. But in most cases, resistance seems to grow as they become adults.

In the Kuru outbreak in New Guinea, in which another transmissible encephalopathy was found among cannibals, children suffered

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Ginseng is also reputed to boost stamina and concentration. But it can have side effects and interacts badly with some more orthodox medicines. It can compound the effect of antidepressants and tranquillisers, and should not be taken during any acute illness or by people with a psychiatric problem.

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Jools Holland: funny, likeable, but rendered almost speechless by any topic verging on the personal. The puzzling thing is how he got round to forming his relationship

Jools the obscure

A lighthouse next, Jools Holland thinks. "We'll build it just there," he says, gesturing out of the window past the porter's room, the ladies' lavatory and the platform benches of the cute little railway station he has constructed.

One can only marvel both at the accommodating nature of the south London planning authorities and the grandeur of Holland's vision. His toytown offices are called Helicon Mountain, after the Greek island where poets discovered their muse — a title which seems a touch flamboyant for a suburban hillock with panoramic gasworks views.

Mary Riddell meets Jools Holland, jazz genius and lighthouse builder, who used to find talking about his private life excruciating

Until you walk down to the end of the road, where the small, stone-clad semis are the smarter versions of the nearby homes where Holland grew up, impoverished and flitting from the debt collectors.

Not that he makes a big deal about his past. "If you're going to be a musician, it's all right to come from a big city suburb and be expelled at 15. A bit like Eton and the Guards for old Tory Prime Ministers."

Holland's own finishing school was a stint with a band called Squeeze in the Seven-

ties, followed by *The Tube*, in which he was cast as Paula Yates's screen husband and castigated for swearing on air. The point where he switched from B-list cult figure to serious musician is not absolutely clear, possibly because he so adroitly mastered the difficult art of making accessible the difficult and the obscure. His music programme, *Later*, is running on BBC2, he has just finished a stint with Jazz FM, and this week he will play five concerts with his 12-piece band, the Rhythm and Blues Orchestra. A fine jazz pianist, he is putting the last touches to the band's album, *Sex and Jazz and Rock and Roll*, which will be released shortly.

He is half-sitting, half-lying on a leather Chesterfield in his station-master's office, and it is fair to say that he does not instantly evoke great allure. His jumper is ancient, his frayed cords a violent shade of pumpkin.

In addition, he coughs as he scratches as he talks, very fast and rather nervously. He knows that — excellent musician as he is — the great fascination is how he came to be so, and, at 38, he still glorifies what sounds the bleakest of childhoods as a romantic adventure.

His father drifting in and out of work, a trawl round different homes, oil lamps because there was no money to pay the electricity bill and a family split up when his parents' marriage fell apart. "I don't think it damaged me. I'd prefer to substitute the word abuse with experience. The worst thing about my parents was not the split but the reunion.

"I was having a nice, frenzied time with no one to bother me when that happened. Not long after they got back together, I moved out." He was 15, with no qualifications but the ability, nurtured by an uncle in his grandma's front room, to play jazz piano.

It would be enough — not

only to sustain him but the family to which he would become guardian. His brother Christopher plays with the band, his brother Richard runs his recording studio, and the office is managed by a middle-aged cousin. But Jools Holland was never groomed for cosy domesticity.

His relationship with a hairdresser called Mary Leahy, with whom he had two children, fell apart on the day that he visited Bamburgh Castle to film for *The Tube*, met its 23-year-old mistress, Christabel,

about the difficulties. It's just that it wasn't like it's always been reported.

"We were at Bamburgh filming Bryan Ferry, and Christabel was there because she was a friend of his wife, Lucy. She didn't live at the castle — never has done — and that story must have been quite annoying for the people who did. So, no, it wasn't like the chateleine floating down in a nightie with a cup of tea for the film crew.

"Afterwards we didn't meet again for ages. I've blotted exactly what happened, although I wrote it all down in a diary. Her husband, Lord Durham, had gone off with some woman, and Christabel was travelling through Newcastle when we met again.

"And that time we stayed together. Yes, I think we will get married now. There you are, a scoop. It would be nice. A big party, a lovely party, maybe fancy dress. Do people do that for weddings?" Whatever the correct social code might be in the relationship between a member of the aristocracy and the south London boy made good, it was violently breached soon after their relationship began.

Jools's father stole Christabel's jewellery, worth £35,000, and served 15 months in prison. Jools has always said that his father was temporarily soft in the head, but the cause was clearly more complex. Drink? Envy?

"Well, maybe it was drink as well. It was a lot harder for him than for me. I wasn't the person who had to go to prison. I was just disappointed."

The most puzzling thing is how Jools — funny, likeable, but rendered almost speechless by any topic verging on the personal — actually got round to forming his relationship, let alone coping with the bitter rifts which it must have provoked.

"Look, I'm not shy," he says suddenly. "You have to be a bit of a show-off to succeed in music. And yes, you're right

It must, you imagine, be devastating to see a parent so shamed, but Jools Holland has always managed to rationalise the unthinkable. Above his desk is pinned a press clipping about Keith Moore, the accountant who stole £6 million from Sting-Holland, another of his celebrity clients, lost money too, but his chief resentment is for what he still sees as a system geared to the privileged.

"I thought Moore's sentence was too short, and my dad's was too long. It didn't seem fair." And so the magazine cutting remains, a lone reminder of a harsher world in the station-master's office, filled with model trains and vintage Dinky toys. The sort of clutter reminiscent, perhaps, of a lost childhood.

But that is far too complicated. If he wanted toys, Holland says, he would buy himself big, fast cars and grown-up gadgets, but he has no wish for such obvious symbols of success. The lighthouse will do.

Discrimination that makes women sick

Sue Corrigan on the health price high-achievers may pay

CAN SEXISM make women sick? According to two American psychologists it can and, for millennia, it has.

Professors Brett Silverstein and Deborah Perlick, psychologists at two New York universities, say they have identified a syndrome that has afflicted talented and ambitious women at least since the days of the ancient Greeks.

The symptoms of what they have christened *Anxious Somatic Depression Syndrome* include eating disorders, depression, anxiety, severe headaches, insomnia and menstrual disturbances.

They cite

the daughters of Freud, Marx and Darwin

modern research alike point, they say, to psychological problems developing among bright women whose fathers value their intelligence highly during their girlhoods, but whose mothers are discouraging.

"We believe that girls treated in this way in childhood suffer from later problems because they develop childhood aspirations and self-concepts built around abilities which go beyond the feminine ideal. Because they define themselves in ways not considered appropriate for females, they are never fully accepted."

Clear examples from the past, they say, include Sigmund Freud's daughter Anna, Karl Marx's Eleanor, Charles Darwin's step-daughter Margaret, who all suffered from chronic and mysterious illnesses, with depression, headaches and insomnia.

The authors measured the incidence among college students of purging — using laxatives, diuretics or self-induced vomiting to control weight. Among women who reported that in childhood they placed much more importance on their own academic achievement than on their household skills, and that their fathers considered their mothers unintelligent, more than a third reported purging.

Roughly one in five of the students said either that they felt their mothers had been very limited by being female, or that they felt guilty over having better lives than their mothers, or that they minimised their own accomplishments so that their mothers would not feel bad about themselves.

Women who reported any one of these problems were about 20 times as likely to list symptoms of disordered eating and depressed mood as those who did not.

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All good exams come in threes

The Dearing reforms echo 1944, but they will be none the worse

for that, says Paul Barker

The rise of the meritocracy continues. Sir Ron Dearing's nosebag of new proposals for school exams confirms it. Sift through the chaff of education-speak (why do the people who oversee teachers always use such robotic language?), and you will see that essentially Sir Ron is continuing the trend away from the homogenised, pasteurised school.

This shift began when it became clear that in many places, especially in cities, the comprehensive school and mixed-ability classes would never deliver the promised goods, much less (as egalitarians hoped) the Promised Land. Instead of a single, imposed pattern, the ideal is now for the school to be a kaleidoscope — a multitude of

a kaleidoscope has three sides. So did the great watershed Education Act of 1944.

It foresaw a grand tripartite system of free grammar schools, technical schools and, for the rest, secondary modern schools.

Like all reforms in British schools since the late Victorians made elementary education compulsory, the Act avowedly aimed at catching up with the Germans. Sir Ron makes the same comparison (and tosses in the Japanese for good measure). But the vision was never achieved. Few technical schools were created. Eventually, the grammar school cream was stirred into the secondary modern whey. And that, for the time being, was that.

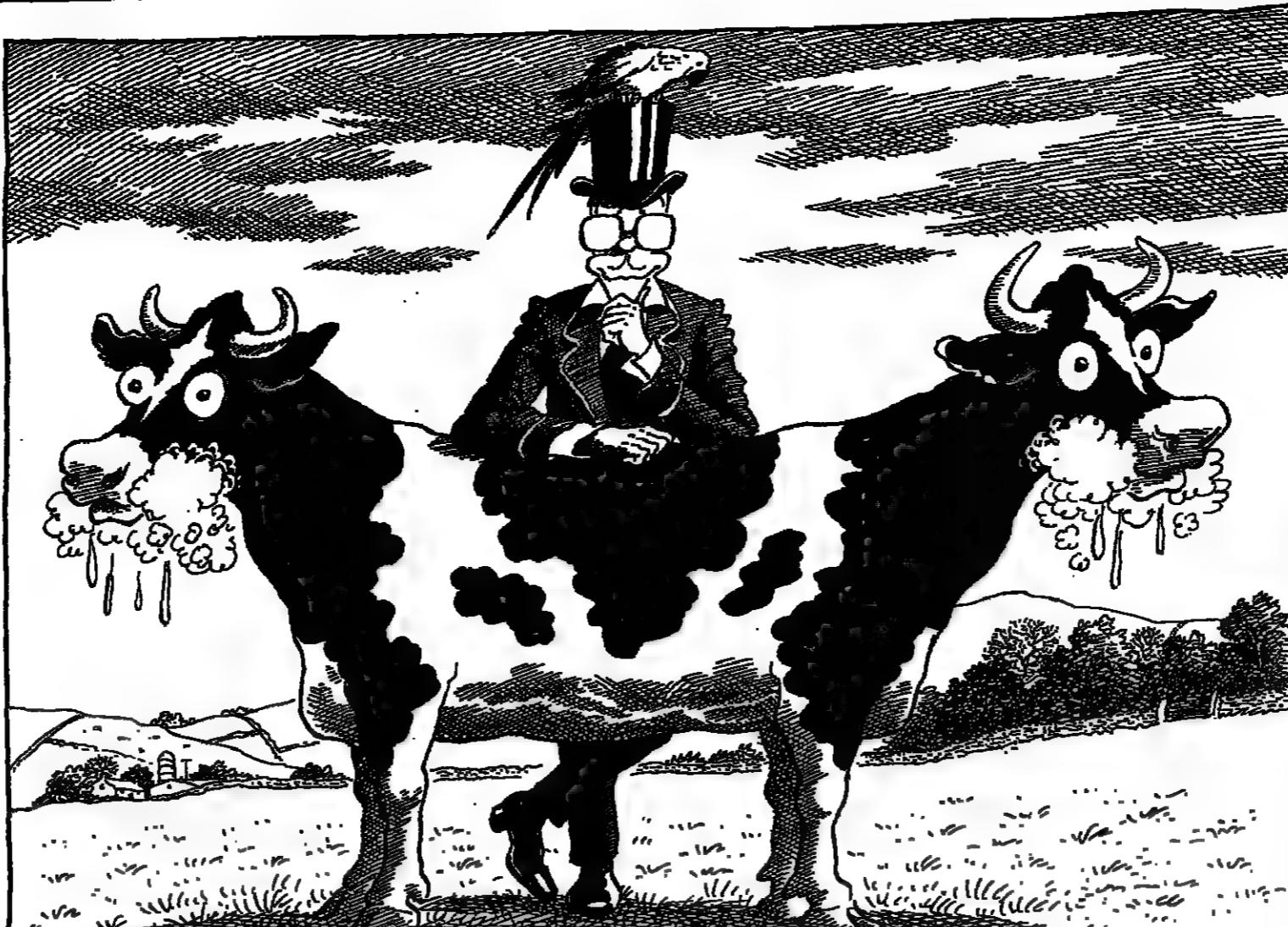
But Sir Ron is reinventing, if not the wheel, then at least the kaleidoscope. On the one hand, there will be special, tougher A levels — what the Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, calls "the gold standard". The belief that some (such as English) have become easier to pass must be rooted out. On the other hand, there will be new "applied" A levels in such subjects as tourism or catering (a tattered-up version of what until now have been called Advanced GNVQs). These are the alternative goals for pupils who want to stay on until 17 or 18, and who should, in the national interest, be encouraged to do so.

At present, however, there are pupils who find it frustrating to be obliged even to stay on to the legal leaving age of 16. They are sometimes, ludicrously, put in for GCSE exams, with no hope of getting better than the dimmest grades. They may even hang around after that, for lack of alternative ambition. (The present bob-a-nob school funding system tempts heads to cling on to pupils. There's cash in it.) But one fifth of pupils don't pass a GCSE, at any grade, in the crucial subjects of English and maths.

This is the third side of Sir Ron's kaleidoscope. These pupils will be allowed to become semi-detached, spending less time in school and more on work training — to their teachers' and fellow-pupils' best available advice, was that there was very little risk of BSE infecting human beings. Ministers, particularly John Gummer at agriculture and Kenneth Clarke at health, interpreted that as "no risk", though that was neither an honest nor a prudent interpretation of the scientific evidence, and has since been contradicted by further evidence.

The Government failed for nearly ten years to get a grip either on the epidemic itself or on the safety measures in the abattoirs. If there had been comprehensive action after 1986 or 1989, the epidemic could probably have been contained at a much lower level, and British beef might now be as safe as some ministers say it is. This lack of grip is only too evident.

The Minister of Agriculture thinks



DR. DOLITTLE Peter Brookes

Not just bad luck

The Government failed to get a grip on BSE and has only itself to blame

I have received an interesting letter from Dr Anthony Cullen, an agricultural microbiologist with veterinary experience. He confirms some points I made about BSE on Monday, and adds others.

He agrees that it is an old, but rare, disease in cattle, and recalls treating a cow with "typical signs of BSE" in 1962.

He agrees that BSE is more likely to be a cow rather than a sheep prion disease, and points out that only one experiment in the United States in 1979, has succeeded in infecting cows with scrapie by direct injection of sheep brain material.

In sheep, a susceptibility gene

determines the infection by scrapie. If a similar mechanism exists in other animals, then human beings would only be infected with BSE if they had a genetic susceptibility, in addition to coming into contact with the organism.

That would help to account for so large a cow epidemic of BSE producing so few human cases. Dr Cullen adds an interesting comment on the epidemic of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease as a result of cannibalism in New Guinea. "The women took the brain tissue of the dead person and pushed it into a bamboo tube before it was cooked. It was believed that it was the act of stuffing these tubes which led to spores of bamboo inoculating the women with infected material into the bloodstream through minute cuts to thumbs or fingers. It seems likely, on general principles, that a small dose would be infective if inoculated, but a large dose would be required by mouth.

The cases [of BSE] in people have often been in meat-handlers."

Dr Cullen adds modestly that he is not an expert in BSE or scrapie.

Nonetheless, his experience confirms that BSE is almost certainly a long-standing disease in cattle, which does not seem to have caused identifiable trouble to human beings in the past.

His reference to the susceptibility gene — which could have been widely transmitted in cows by a single bull through AI — and his suggestion of the possible significance of injection, all strengthen the view that any human epidemic caused by BSE is likely to remain a limited one.

But BSE has become a matter of panic, rather than of science. It is also becoming increasingly important as a political issue, threatening just because there is a panic, damaging to Britain's relations with Europe, dangerous to the future of the Government. Many people are now genuinely frightened of eating beef; even those who regard the risk as negligible are put off by the fact that there is a risk at all. Parents are alarmed by the risk to their children. The hamburger, whether made of British or any other beef, has become an object of almost superstitious horror.

It may be true that one is no more likely to catch Creutzfeldt-Jakob from British beef than one is to win the lottery. That is not much of an argument to use to the British public. 90 per cent of whom have bought lottery tickets in the hope of winning. If one applies the simple test of "how would I behave in their shoes?", the decision of the European Union to ban British beef was obviously inevitable.

If the potentially diseased animals

were German or French, and the ban

were being imposed to protect British beef-eaters and cattle, there would scarcely be a single vote for letting the alien beef into this country. It is no good our huffing and puffing about the veterinary evidence. Once the Secretary of State has admitted the ten human cases of probable BSE infection, the argument was irresistible.

The rest of the world has seen

things in the same way as the European Union. The United States, which believed almost certainly

wrongly, that it has never had a case of BSE, banned British beef as long ago as 1989, and is now thinking of banning beef from other EU countries as well. South Korea has not only banned British beef, but is conducting searches of all flights arriving from Britain to make sure that the passengers are not smuggling in the odd side of beef.

The fact that Britain would have behaved exactly like the rest of the European Union if the situation were reversed has not made the European decision any more palatable here. As the British see it, the EU has a bad common agricultural policy which operates against Britain's interests.

Now that Britain has a particular agricultural problem, and a big one,

the talk of Brussels is about British

beef, not about European beef. We see Europe as wanting to have it both ways. The motto of the EU is supposed to be that of the three musketeers: "One for all, all for one." When it comes to British beef, we seem to be left to fight alone, despite the offer of an unspecified amount of cash.

Yesterday on the Today programme, a Swedish lady explained that Britain could not expect to win every issue in Europe. (The Swedish accent can sound unbearably condescending to the British ear.) The trouble is that we do not think that we

win any issues nowadays. The European beef ban has come at a difficult moment, before the Turin conference and the IGC. How can any British Government make concessions on such

issues as majority voting when the British believe that they will always be ruthlessly outvoted?

A ny European observer who imagines that this would be easier for Tony Blair and the Labour Party does not understand the present mood of the British public. We feel that we have been getting the wrong end of the European deal; we feel that British interests are always subordinate to those of the Franco-German alliance. Tony Blair cannot afford to fight the next general election as the Kohl-Chirac candidate. As with the beef panic, the psychology of the British reaction to Europe has become a political reality in its own right. The Government's handling of the BSE epidemic raises the same issues as the Scott report. That left an unforgettable picture of a Government which had lost its administrative grip. One could even feel sorry for ministers, who seemed to be as bewildered by the system they had to operate as anyone outside might be. There does not seem to have been much to choose between their handling of BSE and that of arms to Iraq — except that the public cares much more about BSE. The same doubts exist about the honesty of a series of official statements. After 1989, the scientific position, on the

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Labour bound by ballot
Peter Riddell
on Blair's bid to outflank revolt

Tony Blair's decision to ballot Labour Party members this autumn on a draft of its manifesto is his most important initiative since the rewriting of Clause Four. It is intended not only to demonstrate the substance of new Labour, but also to improve the prospects for success in office.

Mr Blair is haunted by the failure of the last two Labour Governments. He believes they founded in part because they lost the support of party activists. There was a conflict between the the policies of the party at an election and subsequent constraints which leaders faced in office. This produced constant tension between the party and government, as revealed in the diaries and memoirs of the 1960s and 1970s.

The antics of the party conference and of the national executive, including left-wing ministers such as Tony Benn, in rejecting government policies, were a constant irritation to Harold Wilson and James Callaghan. This fostered a myth of betrayal, and fuelled a dramatic swing to the left after the party lost office in 1970 and 1979. At the party conference in the autumn of 1979, MPs and former ministers were boozed by delegates, and treated as traitors. They were accused of abandoning the policies of the party. The only way the leadership could assert authority was by relying on trade union bloc votes to counteract constituency activists.

Mr Blair is trying to avoid these traps by caution about promises and by binding in the party, and also Labour MPs, from the start. The most distinctive feature of Mr Blair's leadership has been his desire to go over the heads of party activists — as well as union leaders — to the wider membership. One-member, one-vote in party decisions has worked strongly in his favour, not least because the membership has risen by nearly a half to 365,000 over the past two years, and many of these new members are keen Blairites.

Not only did Mr Blair receive strong support from individual party members when he was elected leader in July 1994, but he also won the 85 per cent backing of members over the rewriting of Clause Four last April. This was despite early opposition from some left-wing activists and votes against change by the two largest unions.

The party constitution was amended last October to allow for membership ballots on major policy and other questions. The party conference, where the unions still have 50 per cent of the votes, remains sovereign, but in practice a mass ballot will have greater legitimacy. A series of policy documents appearing over a few months will be brought together in an early version of the manifesto in June, before being debated at the party conference in October and then going to a ballot shortly afterwards.

Mr Blair is adamant that this will be a tight document — no "shopping-list of policies starting with agriculture and ending with zoos", as Robin Cook put it. Instead, there are likely to be a few "flagship" policies, symbolising how Labour would be different from the Tories, such as the individual learning accounts for training being published later today. Gordon Brown says detailed proposals on tax will not come until the full election manifesto, in part because of the probability of further tax cuts in November.

June's document will avoid the detailed and ultimately counterproductive pledges on tax, child benefits and pensions which John Smith made before the 1992 election. The statement is likely to be sparse — making a virtue of its absence of wish-lists and its stress on hard choices, with resources being shifted within existing budgets. The risk is that it will be bland. Following the 1987 and 1992 defeats, Labour leaders are obsessed with not saying anything which allows the Tories to accuse them of favouring higher public spending and taxes.

The process matters as much as the substance. As Mr Blair said, the ballot "will give the party an opportunity actively to pledge their support for the Labour programme for government". The unstated corollary is that activists should complain later about the programme, and if, or rather, when, ministers have to take tough economic decisions in office. Mr Blair wants to ensure that not only are no extravagant promises made but that the party is explicitly committed to what is promised.

The move may be bold, but it should not be risky. Members are being offered a straight yes or no: the main doubt is over the level of turnout. But merely by launching the exercise, Mr Blair has given the leadership and the party a focus and something to do over the long pre-election period. The prize is that Labour could take office in a year or so on a realistic programme which the party has endorsed. He wants to show that Blairism is backed by the party. But he will not confuse a desire to win with unconditional support. Mr Blair could still face plenty of rumbles and party rows if he wins power. New Labour may be in control, but old Labour is not dead yet.

Labour day

NEW YORK is to unbutton its *embonpoint* and embrace Tony Blair. The Labour leader, who yesterday announced that every cloth-cap member of his party will be able to vote on its manifesto, is to be guest of honour at a £750-a-head lunch next month organised by the British American Chamber of Commerce. He will be given the sort of treatment that would have Donald Trump salivating over his foulard tie.

The seven-course at the Empire State Ballroom of the Grand Hyatt hotel is uncharted water for Labour. Previous speakers at the chamber's big events include Baroness Thatcher and John Major but Blair is the first Opposition leader, let alone Labour politician, to speak to the gathering in living memory.

Whenever Neil Kinnock crossed the Atlantic in the 1980s, he was kept waiting by the American big guns, or passed on to low-ranking officials. But before his big day in New York, Blair will be holding summit-style talks with President Clinton and Vice President Gore, men of his own age with whom he is politically sympathetic. To show he is not all left-sided, however, he

will also be meeting Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger.

Tables for ten are being hawked round the Big Apple at £750 each. Champagne socialists may be disappointed that the cash isn't going to new Labour coffers — but, my dears, what an honour for Tony.

• Literary news: Bertelsmann, the publishing giant from the Ruhr Valley, has written to Thomas

Hardy and, unable to find his address, sent its missive to his local library in Dorchester. "Dear Thomas Hardy," says the letter, "what do you think about the use of computers in libraries?" County librarian Carleton Earl is unimpressed: "Geography's all right, but they should jolly well mug up on their history."

Yorkie bar

YET MORE bovine information from Harriet, my uncle Roddy's confused moor. Those two pillars of Brinsford, the clergy and farmers, have succumbed to the beef madness.

Beef is off at Bishoptonore, the home of Dr David Hope, Archbishop of York, and a fixture on the northern meat circuit. Much missed already are Hope's home-made cottage pies — guaranteed to make even the sturdiest Mothers' Union member tremble — and the pastry pies made by a fiendishly talented palace chef.

Meanwhile, in a survey in *Farming News*, it is reported that while 97 per cent of farmers vow to have roast beef for Sunday lunch, 65 per cent freely confessed to having been put off their beef.

• Could Terry Major-Ball have found his own, idiosyncratic sol-



Stamp. Across the face is written "Shrimpton" while the back is engraved: "With love Terry". Shrimpton writes tersely of the watch in her autobiography: "I gave that away in later years. I didn't need reminding of my name."

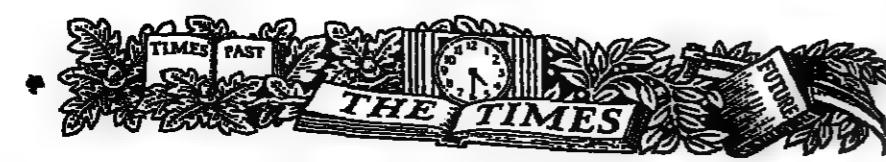
Bath oils

THE MARQUESS of Bath and his wife were scrutinising Gray Jolliffe's saucy cartoons with an intensity that only a connoisseur of erotic art could muster on Tuesday night at an exhibition in the Grosvenor House hotel. He explained he was not inclined to buy any of the works: "I prefer to paint my own."

The pigtailed aristocrat's latest is a series of heads of his ancestors around a spiral staircase at Longleat. "I have already completed a series of heads of my loved ones," he says, "now I am doing the crowned heads."

• Priceless

LISTEN for the dull clank



ACADEMIC QUESTIONS

The A level should not be debased

Sir Ron Dearing certainly deserves full marks for effort. His 150-page report on the future of education for those aged between 16 and 19 makes nearly 200 recommendations. Sir Ron hopes his suggestions will simplify the structure of qualifications for school-leavers, increase the numbers who have something to show for their studies, broaden the range of important skills acquired and improve standards overall. It is an ambitious programme, and several of his proposals are worthwhile. But, far from strengthening the A level, the "gold standard" of the education system, there are reasons to fear that Sir Ron's suggestions may leave it subtly debased.

The area most immediately in need of improvement is technical and vocational education. The system of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and NVQs does not enjoy parity of esteem with A-levels. The vocational qualifications are widely perceived to be less rigorously policed. Nevertheless, the number of pupils who do not complete the course is still higher than among those attempting A levels.

Sir Ron, rightly, argues GNVQs would command greater respect if external assessments were used more widely. Outside verification that standards have been breached will enhance the credibility of the qualification. Other recommendations intended to increase the status of GNVQs are more questionable. Bringing together the two regulatory bodies, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, as well as constructing the initial syllabuses to allow pupils to switch at an early stage between A level and GNVQ in similar fields appears efficient. Some pupils may gain from the flexibility, but others could suffer from a levelling down of standards between technical and academic courses, over time.

The proposal to rename the GNVQ the "applied A level" is also of dubious virtue. Calling polytechnics universities has not improved the quality of their education. GNVQs will command respect by guar-

anteeing over time a nationally agreed level of expertise in a specific field. They should seek to command respect in their own right, not by riding on the reputation of another examination.

The A level itself is under threat in two small, but significant, ways. The first is Sir Ron's suggested new umbrella qualification, the "National Advanced Diploma". This is designed to ensure school-leavers study across a broader spectrum but, in doing so, runs counter to the spirit of specialisation that makes the A level system so attractively rigorous. Moreover, the Diploma treats technical and academic qualifications in such a way as to potentially lessen the distinction between the two. The Diploma is also designed to entrench "key skills" in "number" and "literacy". Sir Ron's aim is admirable. But if pupils cannot count and communicate by the time they are 16 a new piece of paper is unlikely to help.

The other erosion of excellence is the ascendancy of the "modular" approach to A levels. Sir Ron wisely notes that the modules are popular with A level students because they allow sections of the course to be sat, and re-sat, in such a way as to bump up marks overall. Fewer and fewer pupils earn the marks to pass their A levels at the final exam. A level grades have been rising slowly even though a far larger proportion of the school population now take A levels, arousing strong suspicion that with, among other things, the growth of modular teaching, the qualification is easier to acquire.

Sir Ron is alive to the weakness of the modular system but that does not stop him arguing for an eventual unified approach where half the marks for the A level come from modules, half from the final exam. Modular teaching is the enemy of excellence and a hidden danger in an ever-more competitive world. Sir Ron should not be giving it any encouragement. The A level is the qualification to which pupils aspire and which employers respect. Specialist knowledge, sophisticated skills and tough final examinations are its hallmarks. The Government should get back to those basics.

PAIN FOR GAIN

Cruelty, charity and the RSPCA

Britain's charities are the mirrors which reflect our concerns as a society. From these institutions — which span the range from the educational and the religious to the recreational and the eccentric — one learns as much about the moral inclinations of Britons as one does from Parliament, from the English language and from the country's press. No charity has been more emblematic of these concerns than the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

Yet the RSPCA, today, is a body which appears to have lost a little of its direction. The country's largest charity — it has over 200 branches, each registered separately with the Charity Commission — was conceived originally to address everyday acts of cruelty and harm to animals. Painfully tethered dogs, maltreated cats, fox cubs, badgers and swans that swallow fishing tackle were the familiar subjects of its campaigns. As a nation, Britons abhor wanton cruelty to animals and the RSPCA, by popular support, was the body which best endeavoured to protect animals from unthinking inhumanity.

The animal charity, however, has veered some distance away from its original, unimpeachable trajectory. The Charity Commissioners, who oversee the activities of institutions such as the RSPCA, have now alerted the animal body to a potentially costly risk: stop campaigning against those activities which are "beneficial to the community" or you will endanger your

charitable status. The commissioners have in mind, specifically, the RSPCA's campaign against animal vivisection, commonly conducted by the medical community in pursuit of their scientific ends.

The commissioners are right, and their directive must not be misunderstood. Under a complex mixture of statute and common law, charities are organisations which enjoy tax exemptions by particular virtue of their activities: these must be for the public benefit, and can include animal welfare. But the courts have refused consistently to recognise political objects as "charitable", and this must include a campaign to put a stop to vivisection. Such experiments are entirely lawful, and a campaign to procure a change in the law is an inherently political campaign.

The RSPCA is not the first major charity to fall foul of the commissioners in this way: Oxfam was given warning often over its campaigns to end apartheid in South Africa, and over pamphlets urging the cancellation of Third World debt. The point is not that such campaigns — whether against apartheid or animal vivisection — are inherently undesirable; in fact, both, in their respective times, have enjoyed considerable popular appeal in this country. The real issue is whether a charitable organisation's income should, in the circumstances, enjoy exemption from income tax, corporation tax and capital gains tax. There is no reason why it should, if it exceeds the bounds allowed to it by law.

OUR FRETFUL RELATIONS

A good judgement from the Strasbourg court

At a time when decisions taken by pan-European institutions are not popular with everyone in Britain, let us pause to cheer a commonsense judgment issued yesterday from the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. British judges had previously insisted that a journalist, William Goodwin, reveal the name of a source who had been assured anonymity; they had fined the reporter when he refused. The ECHR rejected these decisions — and rightly so.

Mr Goodwin has emerged victorious from a long and wearisome struggle. Back in 1989 and only a few months out of university in his first job on *The Engineer*, he received a leak of some internal figures from inside a company which was in the course of raising fresh capital. Alerted to Mr Goodwin's knowledge before anything was printed, the company won an injunction to suppress any mention of its name, let alone its financial plans. Mr Goodwin was then pressed to reveal his source. He consistently refused, losing cases in the High Court and House of Lords and was fined £5,000.

As similar cases have revealed, British judges think they smell humbug when they are faced with journalists claiming that a promise of anonymity must override a court's demand to reveal a source. In the House of Lords, Lord Bridge wondered out loud at Mr Goodwin's "extraordinary attitude that he was entitled to set the law at nought. He puts his duty to his profession above his duty to obey the law."

Mr Goodwin's lawyers pointed out that their client had no problem with the law in general but only with the courts' request for a name which his word to his source prevented him revealing. However the courts maintained that the company's access to justice overrode Mr Goodwin's promise.

Contrast Lord Bridge's vain pronouncements with yesterday's judgment. The judges of Strasbourg point out that two competing public interests, freedom of expression and justice, must be seen in proportion. Only exceptional difficulties and dangers — prevention of crime or risk to life and limb — should justify a demand for a journalist to break his word. The fine imposed on Mr Goodwin was not "necessary in a democratic society" for the protection of the company's rights under English law.

The European Court of Human Rights lost its own sense of proportion at the end of its judgment. Journalists should be entitled to compensation, the judges opined, for "mental anguish and anxiety of being threatened with imprisonment for obeying their conscience and their ethical duties." Mr Goodwin had not sought compensation for his mental anguish since he quite rightly considers this kind of legal fight a natural and occupational hazard of journalism. Relations between the press and authorities are essentially fretful and should remain able to be so.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Some lessons and warnings from Britain's BSE disaster

From Professor Harold Stern

Sir, The recent pronouncements of ministers on the safety of British beef provide a prime example of dangerous, authoritative conclusions that consistently ignore basic facts. In particular, statements that the hazard of BSE resides only in the brain and spinal cord and other offal and that "quality" beef, such as steaks and ribs, is safe could well be erroneous. Muscle is riddled with nerve fibres in communication with the central nervous system and along which the infecting agent could travel.

The fact that it is only in the brain and spinal cord and some other offal that the agent of BSE can be detected by animal inoculation in the laboratory is nothing but an indication of the insensitivity of the techniques currently available to us.

Moreover, to ask a committee to consider whether children are more susceptible to the disease is ridiculous. Is it all right to institute measures to protect children but to continue to expose young adults to the infection?

There is no information available on the infecting dose for humans, but this may not be large, as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) has been effectively transmitted by corneal transplants taken from patients without clinical evidence of the disease.

The occurrence of CJD in 10 young adults in one country, some undoubtedly exposed to infected cattle, within a relatively short period of time (report and leading article, March 21) is unique in medical literature. No reputable medical scientist can ignore this fact, and extreme caution should therefore be exercised when discussing the safety of beef.

This must be the case when dealing with a clinically dreadful disease, which is, as far as we know, invariably fatal and for which there is no treatment.

Only complete eradication of the cattle population can remedy the problem. The number of cases of BSE may now be diminishing but we cannot be certain that the infection will not eventually stabilise in herds, with

increasing length of the incubation period and increasing numbers of animals apparently healthy but infected.

Yours faithfully,
HAROLD STERN
(Professor Emeritus of Virology,
University of London).
16 Hill Rise,
Hampstead Garden Suburb, NW3.
March 27.

From Professor Sam Ahmedzai

Sir, On your letters page (March 25) Mr Derek Nimmo asks whether the Beefsteak Club should change its name to the Lamb Chop Club and the chef proprietor of a restaurant reports that 47 per cent of his diners are still eating beef.

Oh dear, it really is spreading.

Yours faithfully,
SAM AHMEDZAI,
23a Southbourne Road,
Southbourne, South Yorkshire.
March 25.

From Mr Richard Smith

Sir, Profit, Public health scare. Market collapse. Compensation. Profit.

Not exactly an agricultural revolution, just more of the same old tricks. The only difference with this method of subsidy farming is that first you put the consumers' health at risk and then you get the consumer to pay to have the danger removed.

Have we all gone soft in the head?

Yours faithfully,
R. A. SMITH,
Waney Hill,
Theydon Road, Epping, Essex.
March 26.

From Mr B. R. Yates

Sir, Your headline (March 27) announces, "Cabinet may accept call for slaughter". At last, a useful suggestion, but the question remains whether we should slaughter the whole Cabinet or just those members who have reached the end of their useful working lives.

Yours faithfully,
B. R. YATES,
Aston House,
Morville, Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

N Ireland Tories

From Dr Esmond Birnie

Sir, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Ireland have both rightly stressed the importance of all genuinely democratic parties participating in the forthcoming Forum elections in Northern Ireland. I therefore find it bizarre that Conservative Central Office should apparently judge it inappropriate for the Conservative Party itself to contest these elections.

It would seem that the 45,000 Conservative voters in Northern Ireland in the 1992 general election are now to be disenfranchised. Perhaps the party leadership will tell us which other party we should vote for?

The December 1993 Downing Street declaration proclaimed that our Government has "...no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland". Should we now conclude that one logical implication of this is that the Conservative Party has no "electoral interest" in the province? If this were true then it would be a sad position for both the party and the people of Northern Ireland.

Perhaps the deduction we should draw from this and Dr Brian Mawhinney's own political career is that the only way for an Ulsterman to get on in Tory politics is to emigrate from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.

Yours faithfully,
ESMOND BIRNIE
(Deputy Chairman, Conservative
Area Council, Northern Ireland),
c/o Apartment 22,
Ashleigh Manor,
Windsor Avenue, Belfast.
March 26.

Popular classics

From Mr John Woof

Sir, The argument as to the artistic integrity of musical soundtracks (letters, March 23, 26) is very enjoyable. I cannot resist throwing in the fact that, in addition to making his recording of the *Rosenkavalier* waltzes in the 1920s, Strauss agreed to do so with only three first violins, compared with the 14 or more he would have used in the opera house.

I had the pleasure of knowing one of the three in later life, George Whinaker, a child prodigy who played in Sir Henry Wood's orchestra, aged 15, became a front-desk player in the London Symphony Orchestra, was a fine chess player, an enthusiastic walker across large tracts of North Africa, and, like Strauss, a practical man.

Becoming an elderly postman on retirement to Chalfont St Giles, he ensured his deliveries by making them in waltztime on a large tricycle.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN WOOF
(Director,
Park Lane Group,
Bedford Chambers,
Covet Garden Piazza, WC2).
March 26.

Sports letters, page 45

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

National interest in Europe's union

From Miss Barbara Hewson

Sir, I find Nicholas Budgen's article ("EU law must be disobeyed", March 20) absurd.

What Euro-sceptic MPs omit to tell us is that EU law, which is part of the law of the land, is instrumental in protecting ordinary citizens against abuses of power by the executive. No wonder a centralist government like ours despises the European Court of Justice, which for years has done nothing more than maintain the rule of law, which the United Kingdom pledged to uphold as long ago as 1972.

EU law helps the little person: the woman unfairly sacked on grounds of pregnancy; the speech therapist denied equal pay for work of equal value; the bather who complains about our polluted beaches; the British tourist assaulted outside a Paris metro, denied compensation by the French Criminal Injuries Compensation Board because he is not French; the British tourist prosecuted for failing to report himself as an "alien" to the public security authorities in Italy; the Greek couple prosecuted by the German authorities just because the wife had forgotten to exchange her perfectly valid Greek driving licence for a German one.

Sentences such as "We have been treated with too much contempt for too long by those with whom we have tried to co-operate" have the authentic ring of Bismarck and the 1930s dictators: they have nothing whatever to do with Disraeli's generous vision of a party of One Nation.

The test to be applied is how we — let alone Bill Cash — would have reacted if a similar piece, *mutatis mutandis*, had appeared in *Die Zeit*.

Yours truly,

MICHAEL WELSH
(Chief Executive,
Action Centre for Europe Ltd,
181 Town Lane, Whittle le Woods,
Chorley, Lancashire).
March 22.

China and Taiwan

From the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China

Sir, I was shocked by the leading articles on the Taiwan question in your paper (March 12 and 19). Taiwan has been an inalienable part of China since ancient times, and the Taiwan question is entirely China's internal affair. This is a fact recognised by the international community.

Since the People's Republic of China was founded, most countries in the world, including the United States, have recognised the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China and Taiwan as a part of China.

Nothing but the claim that denies this fact is "dangerous nonsense" as you argue, and the Taiwan question brooks no foreign interference, in whatever form or under whatever pretext. It is the sacred right of each and every sovereign state and a fundamental principle of international law to safeguard national unity and territorial integrity.

The recent tension in the Taiwan Strait was entirely a result of the Taiwan authorities' advocating "Taiwan's independence" and their intensified efforts in creating "one China, one Taiwan" or "two Chinas". The United States shoulders unshirkable

responsibility for this as well. It is the US rather than China that has violated the three Sino-US joint communiques.

The wrong decisions of the United States to sell arms to Taiwan and permit Lee Teng-hui to visit the United States encouraged the pro-independence forces in Taiwan to go further, thus creating new serious obstacles to the settlement of the Taiwan question and the development of Sino-US relations.

The Chinese Government stands for, and has been working persistently for, a peaceful reunification of China based on the formula of one country, two systems. China's policy of not renouncing the use of force is not directed against the Taiwan compatriots, but against foreign forces interfering in China's reunification and attempts in Taiwan seeking independence.

Peaceful reunification is the common aspiration of all the Chinese people. The Chinese Government and people will never permit the separation of Taiwan from China.

Sincerely yours,
JIANG ENZHU,
Embassy of the People's Republic of China,
49-51 Portland Place, W1.

Business letters, page 29

Claims to the fame of Robin Hood

From Mr Brian Alderson

Sir, Yorkshire must reclaim its own Nottingham's adoption of Robin Hood has always been an opportunist publicity stunt, and as you suggest in your leader (March 26), the outlaw is essentially a Yorkshireman. Indeed, the most precise map referred to him in the earliest known ballad has him raiding traffic on the A1, not far from Wentbridge.

There seems to be a reluctance to appreciate this, even in its home county, however. The magnificent Robin Hood exhibition organised last year at the Oldenburg Books Festival (for whose 300-page catalogue I supplied a brief foreword) is set to travel to Warsaw, Zurich, Arhus, Groningen, Berlin, and possibly New York... but old York has rejected it.

A proposal for it to be staged in the Guild Hall later this year collapsed, apparently because the city's Leisure Services were unable to beg, borrow or ambush any cases for the display.

Yours etc,

BRIAN ALDERSON,
28 Victoria Road,
Richmond, North Yorkshire.
March 26.



COURT CIRCULAR

LIECHTENSTEIN PALACE

PRAGUE
March 27: The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh this morning left Warsaw and flew to Krakow. Her Majesty and His Royal Highness were met at the Airport by The President of the Czech Republic.

The Queen drove to Wawel Castle and toured the building. Her Majesty afterwards visited Krakow Cathedral.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh later visited stalls at Cloth Hall and witnessed a bugle call from the Church Tower.

Subsequently Her Majesty and His Royal Highness were present at the opening of the altar in St Mary's Church.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh this afternoon attended a Luncheon at Collegium Maius, Krakow.

Her Majesty and His Royal Highness later flew to Prague and were received at the Airport by Mr Josef Zelenec (Foreign Minister).

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh drove to Prague Castle and were received by The President of the Czech Republic.

Having inspected a Guard of Honour, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness attended a meeting with The President.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh accompanied by The President of the Czech Republic, later visited Charles Bridge.

Her Majesty and His Royal Highness afterwards attended a Reception for media representatives at Liechtenstein Palace.

This evening The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh attended a State Banquet given by The President of the Czech Republic at Prague Castle.

His Royal Highness this morning viewed a restoration project and visited the Jewish Cultural Centre, Remuh Synagogue and Cemetery, Kazimierz, Krakow.

The Queen was represented by the Lady Susan Hussey (Woman of the Bedchamber) of the Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of the Lady Michael Fitzalan Howard which was held in the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks, London SW1, today.

The Duke of Edinburgh was represented by Sir Brian McGrath.

Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester was represented by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Simon Blamire.

The Duke of Kent was represented by Mr Nicolas Adamson.

Princess Alexandra, the Hon Lady Ogilvy was represented by the Lady Mary Muriel.

The Grand Duke of Luxembourg was represented by Brigadier Christopher Wolverton.

The Duke of Edinburgh, President, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, was represented by Sir Brian McGrath.

Today's royal engagements

The Prince of Wales will visit the Royal Infirmary National Health Service Trust, Major's Lane, Falkirk and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Stirlingshire (Colonel James Stirling of Garden).

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 27: The Princess Royal this afternoon visited Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary National Health Service Trust. Major's Lane, Falkirk and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Stirlingshire (Colonel James Stirling of Garden).

CLARENCE HOUSE
March 27: Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, President, The National Trust, today received Sir Angus Stirling on relinquishing his appointment as Director-General.

Her Majesty subsequently received Mr Martin Drury on assuming this appointment.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
March 27: The Prince of Wales, accompanied by the Rt Hon John Gummer MP (Secretary of State for the Environment), this afternoon visited Great Yarmouth.

His Royal Highness visited the Old Naval Hospital and viewed the redevelopment of the site.

The Prince of Wales, President, Business in the Community, met a group of business leaders taking part in the Seeing is Believing programme, looking at ways their involvement in communities might make a difference.

YORK HOUSE
ST JAMES'S PALACE
March 27: The Duchess of Kent, President, Marie Curie Cancer Care, this evening attended a Reception, Mansion House, London, EC4.

Today's events

The Queen's Life Guard mounts at Horse Guards at 11.00.
The Queen's Guard mounts at Buckingham Palace at 11.30.

Lectures

Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Professor Peter Hancock delivered the 31st John Player Lecture, "Engineering a Material Advantage" at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, (IMechE) yesterday. Mr F. Chris Price, President, was in the chair.

The British Library
The second annual Douglas Bryant Lecture to be held on Tuesday, April 2, 1996, has had to be cancelled due to the withdrawal of the speaker, Dr James Billington. The British Library apologises for the short notice of this change, and regrets any inconvenience caused. Further information 0171-412 7760.

Lieutenant-Commander Jeffreys Quill
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Lieutenant-Commander Jeffreys Quill, OBE, AFC, will be held on Friday, May 17, 1996, at noon at St Clement Danes, Strand, WC2.

The Hon Honor Earl
There will be a memorial service for the Hon Honor Earl at noon on Thursday, April 18, at St Luke's Church, Sydney Street, SW3.

DEATHS

NEWS

Blair to ballot party on manifesto

■ Tony Blair is to ballot every member of his party on his general election manifesto in an unprecedented move to prevent a Labour government running into internal trouble that could damage its chances of survival.

■ All 365,000 members will be consulted next autumn about a draft manifesto setting out Labour's priorities for the first years of government and the document will then be fine-tuned in the weeks before the election. Pages 1, 2, 20

Revolution in the sixth form

■ Gillian Shephard signalled the biggest shake-up in sixth-form study for more than 40 years when she ordered tighter A-level standards and introduced a qualifications framework linking vocational and academic courses. She accepted a raft of recommendations from Sir Ron Dearing. Page 1, 10, 11, 21

French victim

A French victim of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease may have died of the same strain of the illness as the British patients whose cases have been linked to "mad cow" disease. Pages 1, 9, 20, 21

Tories hold up

Support for the Tories has held up in the first opinion poll published since the beef row erupted. But Labour and Tony Blair continue to enjoy their highest ratings since last July. Page 10

School power

Wide-ranging proposals to give all schools more power, leading eventually to the establishment of more grammar schools, will be promoted by Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary. Page 2

MP banned

Sir Nicholas Scott, MP, was fined £450 and banned from driving after he left an accident where a toddler's pushchair was trapped between cars. Page 3

Charge dropped

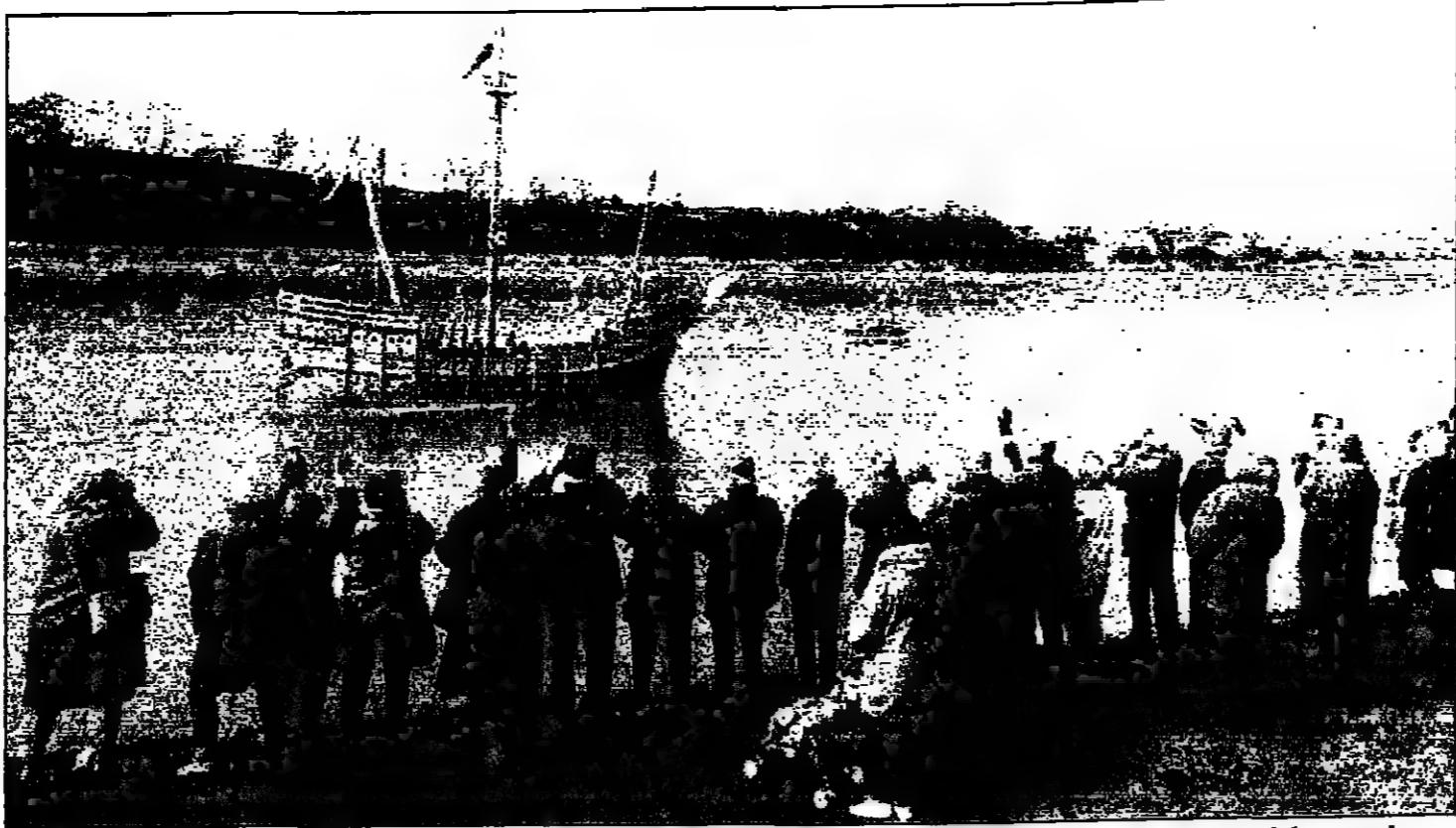
Rachel Heath, a home help accused of attempting to murder a woman who was suffering from terminal cancer, had her case dismissed. Page 5

Patient killed father

A mental patient allowed back into the community despite known homicidal tendencies killed his father and two pensioners. Page 6

Navy women wear the trousers

■ The Royal Navy's bell-bottom trousers have been reprieved after a review of uniforms. Female ratings are going to wear them as well, with the square rig top of their male counterparts, and they will no longer be allowed to carry a handbag to work. The flares had been thought dated but sailors who tested straight-leg trousers said they looked too ordinary. Page 1



Thousands of people watched *The Matthew*, a replica of John Cabot's flagship, as she left Bristol to start sea trials yesterday

BUSINESS

Jaguar: The company won £80 million of aid that will help to pay for investment to build a new car and create thousands of jobs. Page 23

Motorway: BICC and Trafalgar House have scooped a £200 million contract to build and operate a new motorway linking the M1 to the A1 north of Leeds. Page 23

Competition: Plans for a law to prohibit cartels, anti-competitive agreements between companies and other market-rigging behaviour have been tabled by the Government. Page 23

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index rose 11.5 points to close at 3672.4. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 83.2 to 83.4 after a fall from \$1.5222 to \$1.5185 but a rise from DM2.2465 to DM2.2583. Page 26

... easy GCSEs

Students criticised GCSEs as "too easy" in a survey of 16 to 19-year-olds conducted for Sir Ron Dearing. They also doubted the relevance of A levels for later life. Page 11

Briton ran for his life

A Briton told the "backpacker trial" how he ran for his life when an Australian roadworker accused of killing seven tourists opened fire on him. Page 14

Turin trauma

The BSE crisis has cast a harsh new light on the EU summit in Turin, an event intended to set a serene tone for the Maastricht review conference. Page 15

Patten refusal

Chris Patten, the Governor, rejected Chinese proposals to set up a second legislature in Hong Kong before the colony's handover in 1997. Page 16

AA roadwatch

Weatherwatch: AA roadwatch is charged at 30p per minute (cheap rate) and 40p per minute at all other times. Page 26

AA roadwatch

For the latest regional weather forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 500 followed by the appropriate code:

Greater London 701

Kent, Surrey, Sussex 702

Devon & Cornwall 703

Wiltshire, Gloucester, Hereford 704

Bristol, Bath & Avon 705

North Staffs, Cheshire 706

West Mids & Shropshire 707

Shropshire & W. Wales 708

Central Midlands 709

East Midlands 710

Lincolnshire & Humberside 711

Dyfed & Pembrokeshire 712

Gwynedd & Clwyd 713

Wales 714

W. S. Yorks & Derby 715

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY MARCH 28 1996

Acquisitive Lloyds TSB courts New Zealand bank

By RACHEL BRIDGE AND PATRICIA TEHAN

LLOYDS TSB is believed to be planning its third massive acquisition in less than a year with the takeover of Trust Bank New Zealand, which has a market valuation of £600 million.

The deal follows its £1.8 billion acquisition of Cheltenham & Gloucester last August and the £15 billion merger with TSB in December.

Lloyds has been a big player in New Zealand since the mid-1960s when it bought the National Bank of

New Zealand. Sir Brian Pitman, Lloyds TSB chief executive, has made no secret of his admiration for the New Zealand banking and financial system and the economy's low level of inflation.

An announcement is expected from Lloyds TSB through the National Bank of New Zealand within days. A spokeswoman last night said: "Lloyds TSB does not comment on market rumour."

The bank did, however, yesterday move to deny a market rumour in Australia that it was to buy the 50 per cent stake in the Common-

wealth Bank, which is up for sale for an estimated £500 million.

Lloyds TSB does not currently have a significant presence in Australia, where four banks are thought to be inviting bids, although National Bank of New Zealand does have a wholesale banking business in Australia.

HSBC, Midland Bank's parent, yesterday denied rumours that it was seeking a tie-up with Trust Bank. Its Hongkong Bank unit had been seen as a possible suitor for the New Zealand bank. Commonwealth Bank of Australia's ASB

Bank has been seen as the other potential partner for Trust Bank.

Trust Bank, which is mostly involved in mortgage lending, is 78 per cent-owned by community trusts. A 22 per cent stake in Trust Bank was floated on the New Zealand stock market two years ago. The bank recently confirmed that it was in negotiations with an unnamed party over "a possible interest in amalgamation". Its market value has been estimated at about NZ\$1.32 billion, or £600 million.

It is not clear whether Lloyds TSB will acquire the whole of Trust Bank

or a stake of about 50 per cent. Some community trust shareholders have said they are not willing to sell.

The bank would be a good fit with National Bank of New Zealand and with Lloyds TSB's mortgage expertise in the UK. The interest in Trust Bank is seen by some as a change of heart. Lloyds TSB had been rumoured as a seller of National Bank of New Zealand, but was said to be seeking "too high a price", according to an analyst.

However, analysts have expressed some doubt about how Lloyds TSB will fund such a deal. Its

tier 1 capital ratio fell to below 6 per cent after its reverse takeover of TSB. One analyst said yesterday: "It is not in any position to spend."

Lloyds TSB could raise funds through the issue of tier 1 preference shares. In the past, it has shown itself to be against raising capital for acquisitions, preferring to finance them from its own resources.

In the year to March 31, 1995, Trust Bank reported a 27 per cent rise in after-tax profits to NZ\$92.4 million, assisted by higher revenues and cost reductions, exceeding prospectus forecasts.

Jobs bonanza as Jaguar wins £80m aid

By KEVIN EASON, MOTORING EDITOR

JAGUAR yesterday won its fight for £80 million worth of aid that will help to pay for investment to build a new car and create thousands of jobs.

There will be 1,300 new jobs at Jaguar with up to 5,000 created in component suppliers, while another 3,000 in Jaguar and at Ford plants will be safeguarded.

The European Commission dropped objections to British government plans for grants towards the £400 million cost of developing the mid-range car in this country after the personal intervention of Ian Lang, President of the Board

of Trade. He told European Commissioners that the investment was one of the most important in the European motor industry but would be lost to the United States unless the aid was given to Ford, Jaguar's parent company.

Ford could have built the new, small Jaguar at an existing plant at Wixom, near Detroit, one of many areas of the USA desperately bidding for new investment by motor manufacturers.

Mr Lang said yesterday: "We faced very tough competition from an alternative site in the US and I have been personally in touch with Com-

missioner van Miert in Brussels about the strategic importance of this project for the British car industry and for the West Midlands."

Even though there was an emotional attachment to Britain, Alex Trotman, Ford's British-born chairman, was prepared to ditch plans for a site here for the sake of producing the car at lower cost in a modern American plant. Now Britain will build the car that enthusiasts have dreamt about for more than 25 years.

Jaguar is planning a small saloon, codenamed X200, that will challenge the C- and E-class models from Mercedes and BMW's 5-series from 1998. The car will be the spiritual descendant of the famous Mark II series of cars which helped to establish Jaguar around the world in the 1960s. It will also be the first time Jaguar has had a three-model range — comprising the X200, XJ6 saloons, and the new XK8 sports car which is launched later this year — since 1970, when the business was owned by British Leyland.

Jaguar is developing an integrated factory next to its paint plant at Castle Bromwich in Birmingham for the X200. In addition to 1,300 new jobs at Castle Bromwich, the investment will secure around 3,000 jobs at Ford plants at Bridgend in Wales and Halewood on Merseyside which will be key suppliers.

The European Commission had objected to £40 million of the grant which was to come from the Government's regional selective assistance budget, ruling that the aid would have to be substantially cut. The balance of grants package comes in the form of site and land reclamation by English Partnerships, environmental work and training provided by local agencies.

Job cuts are expected to take place across the business but Pilkington would not specify further because it is still involved in talks with unions. Mr Leverton said cuts among the 3,500 British staff would be limited and achieved by natural wastage over three years.



Leverton: "potential"

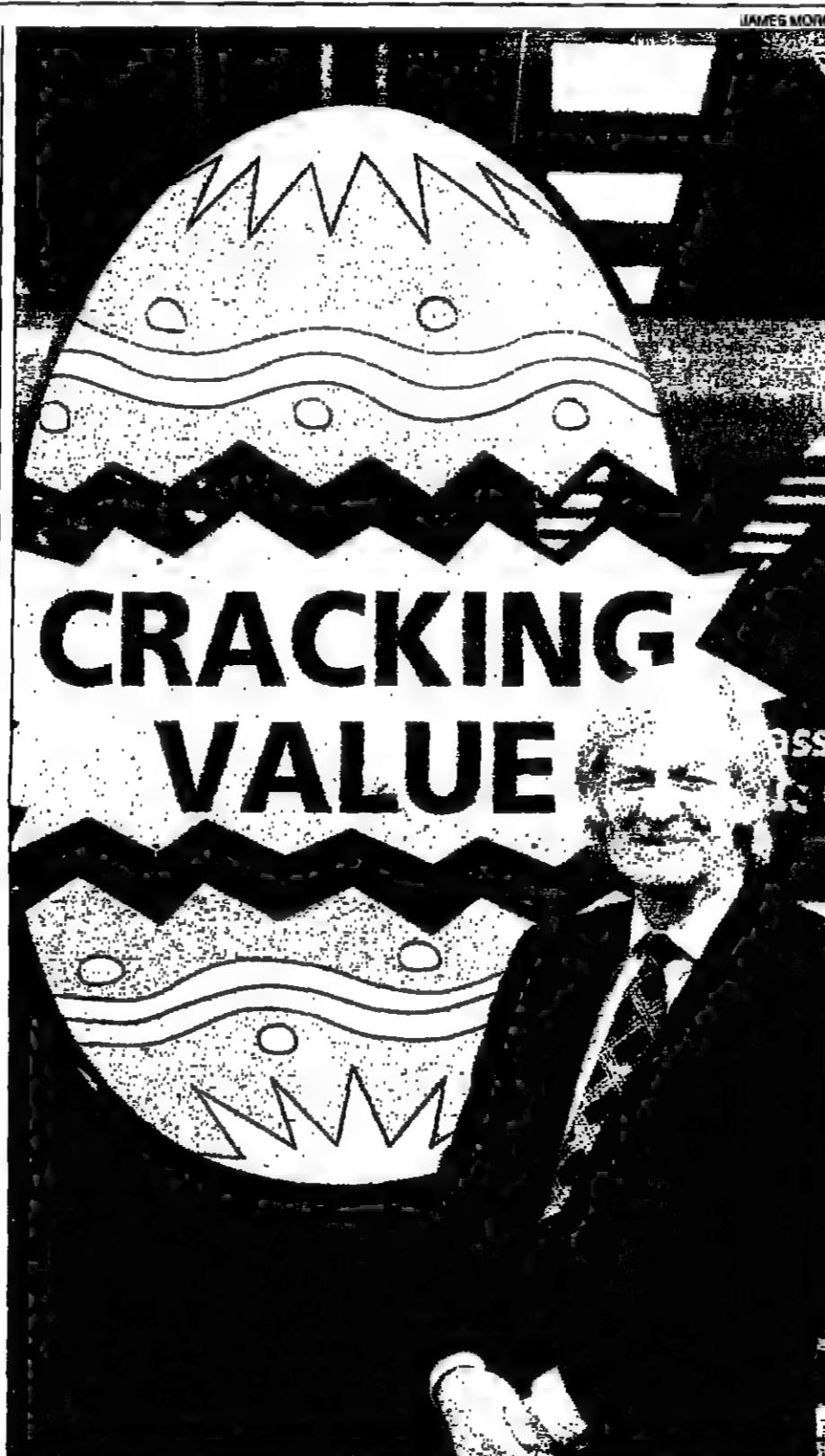
Pilkington, page 27

Pilkington, yesterday revealed it was cutting 1,900 jobs worldwide and would take a £155 million exceptional charge in this year's accounts for restructuring.

The company also upset the City by giving warning that full-year profits, excluding exceptional, would be "marginally" below expectations for the year to March 31. The shares fell 8.5p to close at 198p as the City reacted badly to the news, which closely follows a £300 million rights issue in November, to cover acquisitions.

But the company promised a rapid pay-back from its cost-cutting measures, which will take place over the next three years, and said full benefits would appear from 1998. Roger Leverton, chief executive, said: "The work we have done to date on benchmarking and cost cutting has demonstrated the continuing potential within the group to improve efficiencies and yields in all our activities."

The £155 million charge includes an asset write-down of £85 million and £70 million in costs from the restructuring of operations in Europe and the US. In Europe the company will consolidate operations after



Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy saw Kingfisher, the Woolworths group, lift profits to £287 million

Kingfisher's B&Q dives

By SARAH BAGNALL

KINGFISHER, the Woolworths to Comet retail group, yesterday reported a sharp fall in profits from its B&Q subsidiary, but denied that the chain's chief executive had come close to leaving because of a clash of views over the way forward for the do-it-yourself business.

B&Q, the market leader, saw profits drop by a third to £55.4 million, in the 53 weeks to February 3. However, the decline was more than offset by improved profits from all the group's other operations.

Overall, Kingfisher lifted underlying pre-tax profits 2 per cent, to £287.2 million, on

sales up 8 per cent, to £5.3 billion. The results beat market forecasts, which ranged from £244 million to £282 million, helping to lift the shares 21p, to 554p.

Including one-off costs, pre-tax profits rose 27.6 per cent, to £31.7 million.

Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, chief executive, said: "The result at B&Q was disappointing partly because the DIY market is at its worst for five years." To try to improve the 279-strong chain's fortunes, Kingfisher has cut its store opening programme for the warehouse format from nine to four in the current year. It has also found

scope for £20 million of efficiency gains in B&Q.

Referring to speculation that Jim Hodgkinson, head of B&Q, was about to go because of differences of opinion, Sir Geoffrey said: "It was never an issue" and that the resulting plan of action was put to the board by Mr Hodgkinson.

The group's first-half underlying pre-tax profits fell by 12.8 per cent, but second-half profits rose by 8.7 per cent.

An 11.7p final dividend, due on July 2, makes 16.2p, up from 15.2p. Earnings per share rose by 32.8 per cent, to 34.4p.

Tempus, page 28

BICC and Trafalgar to operate motorway

By ROSS TIEMAN

INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BICC and Trafalgar House have scoped a £200 million contract to build and operate a new motorway linking the M1 to the A1 north of Leeds. BICC, which did not pre-qualify, replaced Wimpey as Trafalgar's partner after Wimpey was acquired by Tarmac in an asset swap. The substitution was approved by the Government on the advice of Price Waterhouse, its consultant on the Private Finance Initiative.

The consortium will design, build, finance and operate the link, the second major road scheme agreed under the PFI. The project involves widening the M62 to four lanes, building a motorway with three lanes in either direction between the M1 at Belle Isle and the A1 at Hook Moor, and widening part of the M1 to five lanes.

To fund construction and operation, the contractors have arranged up to £300 million of finance. Some £15 million will be provided by the two partners as equity. A further £175 million of senior debt will be provided by a panel of six banks, and the European Investment Bank will lend £90 million.

The Highways Agency declined to comment on the outcome of the competition, but an announcement is imminent. Construction work will be undertaken by Balfour Beatty, a BICC subsidiary, and Trafalgar.

The deal opens a new alliance between the two groups. BICC is in a consortium called Connect with Philip Holman, the German contractor, Bank of America and WS Atkins, the consultant, to bid for two projects in the second round of Highways Agency road tenders.

Labour wants annual reports on training

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITISH companies will have to include details of their training performance in their annual reports if Labour comes to power, according to new proposals to be announced today.

Labour believes that the move, part of its plans for training set out in the document *The Skills Revolution — Preparing Britain for the 21st Century*, will increase the provision of training by placing companies under public scrutiny.

The move borrows a technique proposed for board

Arjo chief executive bows out

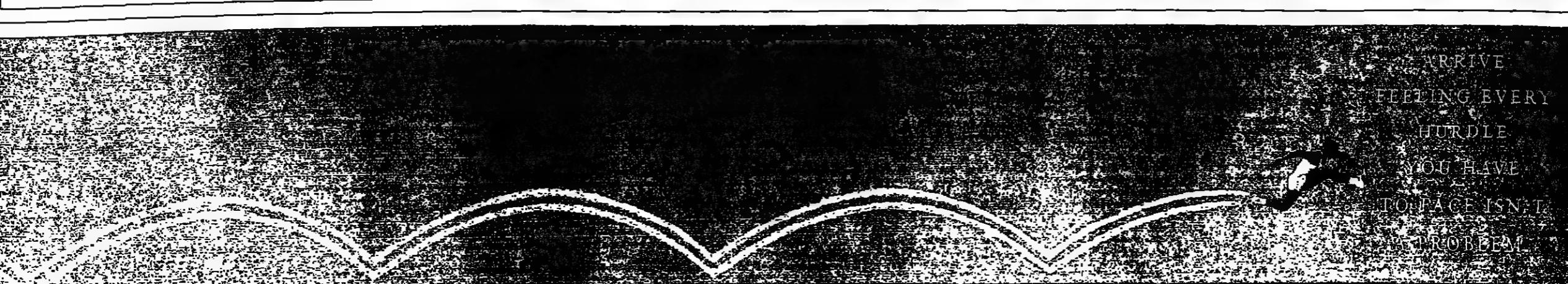
ALAIN SOULAS, chief executive of Arjo Wiggins Appleton, the Anglo-French paper group, is to leave by mutual consent with a total compensation package expected to top £1 million (George Sivell writes).

Compensation negotiations by M Soulas will centre on a two-year contract, an annual salary in the last published annual report of £370,000 and options worth about £400,000 if exercised at yesterday's share price of 204p, up 6p.

M Soulas seems to have fallen victim to a strategic review of the group's problems, announced along with depressing results for 1995 three weeks ago. Pre-tax profits dived from £217 million to £72 million.

Arjo has appointed Philippe Beylier as group managing director. He is currently responsible for the company's merchanting division and takes up his new responsibility with immediate effect.

Skills agenda, page 29



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Dual stock auctions to help sell £32bn gilts

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Government announced yesterday that it estimates it will need to sell £32.6 billion of gilts during the coming financial year and unveiled plans for three new dual stock auctions.

The figure for estimated gilt sales is so high because of a large number of gilt redemptions that have to be refinanced. These are expected to total £11.5 billion, compared with £4.1 billion.

The new dual stock auctions will, for example, mean that the Bank of England could auction one stock on a Tuesday and another one on Thursday. The aim is to reduce the size of individual auctions and enable the authorities to fund more evenly across maturity bands. In the next financial year, there will be three dual auctions and eight traditional single stock auctions.

The Government also confirmed yesterday that it will not hold auctions for index-linked gilts which will continue to be sold through taps.

The gilt market finished a touch lower yesterday, partly because the Government's *Debt Management Report* focused attention on the large amount of stock that has to be absorbed next year. Earlier, however, a £3 billion auction of five-year gilts was more than two-and-a-half times subscribed. This far better than the market had expected.



Graham Howe, left, finance director, and Hans Snook were delighted to talk about the success of Orange's flotation yesterday

Lang outlines updated law to tackle cartels

BY ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS for a new law to prohibit cartels, anti-competitive agreements between companies and other market-rigging behaviour have been tabled by the Government.

The Office of Fair Trading will be given new powers to enter premises and seize or copy documents when searching for evidence of market-rigging. If a Green Paper unveiled by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, is implemented, the OFT would also be empowered to make prohibition orders, banning apparently anti-competitive practices until an investigation into them was completed.

The proposals, awaited since

reforms were promised in 1989, mark a fundamental shift to bring UK competition law closer into line with practice in continental Europe.

John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, welcomed the proposals enthusiastically and called for them to be implemented "as soon as possible". He said: "Strengthening the investigatory powers of the Director-General of Fair Trading to uncover cartels and deal with abuse of market power is to be welcomed. It is overdue."

Mr Lang said he wanted to consult widely to achieve "a system that will bring benefits to business and consumers while at the same time not

imposing any unnecessary regulatory burdens".

The new law is expected to strengthen British competition law and bring it into line with Article 85 of the European Community treaty. Under the proposals, companies that are party to illegal agreements will be liable to fines of up to 10 per cent of their UK turnover. Directors who negotiate or operate prohibited agreements could face fines of up to £150,000 in the High Court.

The OFT, which has 420 staff and an annual budget of £19.4 million, expects to reinforce its 60-strong investigations department if the proposals become law.

Investors get the taste for Orange

BY ERIC REGULY

SHARES in Orange, the third-largest mobile phone company, opened for trading yesterday at 245p, well above their issue price of 205p, and closed at 257p, with 69 million shares changing hands.

Hans Snook, Orange's managing director, said in hindsight the company could have priced the shares higher, but was happy with the price level chosen. The indicated price range was 175p to 205p and strong demand (the issue was ten times oversubscribed) ensured that few investor applications came in below 205p.

He said: "The important thing for us was not ultimately to squeeze every tiny bit that we could out of this thing. We are after all a company that is not making money."

Orange has about 450,000 customers, against 379,000 at the end of December. It is not expected to post operating profits before 1997. Its pre-tax loss in 1995 was £140.5 million.

The offer price valued Orange at £2.45 billion and raised £624 million before the over-allotment of 32.5 million shares or 10 per cent of the total offering of 325 million shares. Of the total, some 26 million shares went to 35,000 individual investors in Britain.

Hutchinson Whampoa, the Hong Kong group that launched Orange in 1994, now has a stake of almost 50 per cent, down from 68 per cent, while British Aerospace's stake fell from 32 per cent to about 22 per cent. The success of the flotation helped to boost BAe shares by 13p to 868p.

Orange plans to use the funds raised to pay off shareholder debt and expand its network. It is aiming for 95 per cent coverage by the end of next year, up from 85 per cent at the end of 1995.

Barclays cuts sum for pension fund

BARCLAYS BANK is to cut its contribution to its main UK pension fund, the Barclays 1964 Fund, by two thirds, or £50 million, for the next three years after an actuarial valuation showed it in surplus. Bifu, the banking union, condemned the move as "immoral". Rob MacGregor of Bifu, said: "We want that money spent on the lowest income pensioners."

The bank is cutting contributions from £75 million to £25 million, or from the equivalent of 7.5 per cent of salary to 2.5 per cent. A three-year valuation last year put the fund value at sufficient to cover 125 per cent of accrued benefits. Barclays said: "This does not affect the staff, but will cost the group less."

Mid Kent ready to fight

MID KENT, the water company, may make a legal challenge to a possible bid by two French companies. Mid Kent says that the bid, which needs Monopolies and Mergers Commission approval to proceed, lies in the face of a 1991 MMC ruling that General Utilities must limit its Mid Kent stake to 19.5 per cent. General Utilities, UK arm of Générale des Eaux, the French utilities giant, has proposed a bid for Mid Kent with Saur, another French company. Both own part or all of two of Mid Kent's water company neighbours. Pennington, page 27

Aegis stake for sale

OMNICON, the US advertising group, proposes to sell its 9.1 per cent interest in Aegis Group, the British advertising and media planning company. Omnicron will also dispose of its 50 million Aegis warrants, for which Aegis is to seek a listing on the London Stock Exchange. Omnicron acquired the shares and warrants when Aegis refinanced in 1993. Yesterday Aegis reported a rise in 1995 pre-tax profits to £33.6 million from £20.1 million in 1994. Earnings were 2.6p a share (1.4p). Dividend payments will resume this year. Pennington, page 27

Churchill buys Pet Plan

CHURCHILL is to announce its acquisition of Pet Plan, the animal insurance company, within weeks. John O'Rearke, its deputy managing director, said yesterday: "The high street insurer, part of Winterthur, the Swiss insurer, said there was a lot of scope to develop Pet Plan because a large proportion of the pet-owning public had never bought cover for their animals. Mr O'Rearke said: "There is an opportunity to broaden the customer base in a market which is currently worth £100 million."

Industry spending falls

CAPITAL spending by manufacturing industries in the fourth quarter was down 5 per cent on the previous quarter and was virtually the same as a year ago, according to revised figures from the Central Statistical Office. For the year as a whole, capital spending increased 8 per cent compared with the figure in 1994. Total capital spending by all industries was 1 per cent higher than in both the previous quarter and a year ago. Spending in 1995 was virtually unchanged from the previous year.

Independent record

INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS, the Irish media group, made record profits of £150 million in 1995 (£137.7 million). Operating profits increased to £149 million (£140.5 million). The rise was chiefly because of the inclusion of Independent Newspaper Holdings, the South African subsidiary, which recently reported a 41 per cent profit increase. The total dividend rises to 10p (10.5p) with a final 10.5p. Earnings rose to £25.16p (£20.5p). IN has a 43.3 per cent interest in Newspaper Publishing, which publishes the UK title *The Independent*.

Tibbett & Britten falls

PRE-TAX PROFITS of Tibbett & Britten, the logistics and supply chain management group, fell sharply to £12.1 million in 1995, from £26.9 million in 1994, in spite of a 41 per cent advance in turnover, to £652.9 million, from £464 million. The results were adversely affected by a downturn in Axial UK, the automotive logistics subsidiary. Earnings per share fell to 18.7p, from 42.8p. However, the total dividend is maintained at 16.2p, with an unchanged 11.2p final, which helped the shares to recover 82p to 505p yesterday.

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□ Pilkington's provision of excuses □ Ford backs Britain at a price □ Cheap insurance in a perfect world

□ SLIP down the rabbit hole, trip through the looking glass, Pilkington's finest, of course, and welcome to the Alice-in-Wonderland world of modern company accounts. A newborn babe or a casual onlooker might assume that the numbers companies are required to report by law have some bearing on events in the real world. The City, of course, knows better.

Accounting standards, rather like that age-old struggle between builders of warships and those making the guns that sink them, are essentially a race between one gang that provides the armour by tightening up the rules and another looking to blow loopholes in them.

The latest round in that struggle is over one-off provisions against profits. These are designed to cope with those little accidents — factories razed to the ground by fire, earthquake or rabid wildebeest — that are unpredictable and should therefore be separated from "proper" profits. We made this much, but except for those wildebeest, we would have made this much, so please, if you would, focus on the second figure.

How nice to be able to remove £X million from this year's profits, blaming those wildebeest rather than the management, and then take the credit for using them to inflate next year's profits.

The City, of course, is not fooled, as it is used to smoothing out any one-off humps to give a view on underlying performance — supposedly. Consider two releases that hit analysts' desks this week.

A profits model for Railtrack from SBC Warburg, in charge of the float this summer, assumes an £11 million exceptional loss for last year, and each of the next five financial years. In other words, one-off, unpredictable costs will cost exactly this, on each and every year to the end of the century. Just this number of wildebeest — no more, no less.

More seriously, yesterday Pilkington announced a £155 million exceptional charge to cover restructuring and job losses, even though the jobs have not yet been agreed or, apparently, even identified. A certain, but unquantified, number will be in St Helens, Pilkington's home base and the focus of that extraordinary local loyalty that helped fight off the 1986 bid from big bad conglomerate BTR.

This looks perilously close to what Sir David Tweedie, chairman of the Accounting Standards Board, calls "big bath" accounting — you pour the bath as deep as you can, and then run off the water later to the depth needed. For Pilkington, which was being unhelpful about the actual numbers yesterday, it has two advantages. Big provisions allow pretty well any dividend to be paid, without reference to niceies such as whether it is covered by real earnings.

Second, the exceptions, covering a three-year programme, come in just months after action from the ASB to tighten the accounting rules even further — action that might make such provisions rather less acceptable in the future.

Jaguar pounces on state subsidy □ RELIEF and joy abound among the ragged-trousered engineers of Coventry and the barefooted teenagers of Castle Bromwich. The grateful indigents of the English Midlands will doubtless wave multi-starred European Union flags gratefully at any passing Volkswagen or Renault in case they should

helped fight off the 1986 bid from big bad conglomerate BTR.

those hard-headed types at the DTI that it was serious and that this was the deal.

Who is quibbling, in any case? State aid to Jaguar is plainly a quite different proposition from foreign state aid for Air France, Iberian Airways or Gruppo Bull.

To start with, they are state-controlled. Jaguar only used to be.

The Government then acted

smartly to allow a Ford takeover.

thinking this would stop Jaguar

sponging on the taxpayers.

Britain's £80 million boost for

Jaguar output was also aimed to

add new competition for other

European car producers, where-

as continental state aid to

airlines was intended to help

close part of the industry's excess

capacity. Clearly, the British aid

is more creative and since com-

petition is good, it must be good

for our continental competitors.

The taxpayers' bill for the

belated Jaguar 2.4 replacement

is also smaller: comfortably

under £100 million compared

with the billions pumped into

foreign airlines. That is a small

price, given that subsidy is still

the way of the big-project world.

Taxpayers should rejoice too and

then, boy, do we have an

insurance policy for you.

If, like the rest of us, you have

suffered the odd prang, had your

video recorder stolen and lost

your luggage at a foreign airport,

the response is less friendly.

Insurers make much of their

ability to pinpoint risk exactly.

Why, they ask, should the careful

driver in a provincial town be

made to pay for the excesses of

the MMC really do hold water.

the boy racer in the city? But the point of insurance is that risk is pooled. If the industry's argument was taken to its logical conclusion, each of us would be assessed individually.

The possibility of genetic testing

brings that logical conclusion

much nearer. Swiss Re has drawn

back, but some insurers in the

United States already require

customers to take tests before they

buy life assurance. Penalising all

but the physically and mentally

perfect raises serious moral ques-

tions. By contrast, no one should

be forced to insure the un-

somewhere between the two.

Change of course

□ THERE'S a bit of leakage in the pipes in Mid Kent. The small water company of the same

name was five years ago par-

tially sealed against any intru-

sions from the French Générals

des Eaux. The MMC told Gen-

eral Utilities, its UK arm, to cut

its stake in Mid Kent to 19.5 per

cent and not to team up with

others to take that holding

higher. But last December, GU

chose to gang up with SAUR,

another French concern, to pro-

pose a bid for Mid Kent. So what

has changed in five years? We

may soon learn from the courts

whether undertakings made to

the MMC really do hold water.

PENNINGTON



contain one of those stern but fair officials from Brussels. At last, these officials have graciously permitted the British Government to hand £40 million smackers, as well as £40 million in kind, to Ford. This aid succeeded in persuading America's number two auto group to build its new small Jaguar car in our starving regional outpost.

Otherwise, so it is said, Ford might well have made the highly traditional, hand-crafted Olde-English Jaguar in Hicksville, Michigan, the Philippines or Sri Lanka. You might think that would not have been the ideal marketing ploy if the plan was to challenge the BMW 5 series with classic British craftsmanship. But Ford certainly convinced

the taxpayers' bill for the belated Jaguar 2.4 replacement is also smaller: comfortably

under £100 million compared

with the billions pumped into

foreign airlines. That is a small

price, given that subsidy is still

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Caradon's profits slump after 'horrendous' 1995

BY SARAH BAGNALL

PETER JANSEN, chief executive at Caradon, said 1995 had been "horrendous" and the worst year of recession for the building products' group.

He said: "Our main markets of North America, UK and Germany behaved miserably. In the first half, we saw a sharp decline in the US, followed in the second half by very sharp declines in the UK and Germany. It is very unusual for all these markets to give problems at the same time."

The downturn resulted in a sharp fall in pre-tax profits from £20.2 million to £14.3 million in the year to December 31. The

underlying decline was exaggerated by £3.3 million of exceptional charges, the bulk of which had been flagged at the interim stage in September.

Part of the charge was to cover the cost of 1,600 job cuts previously announced.

In January it emerged that the Stock Exchange had passed to the Department of Trade and Industry the results of its investigation into share dealings ahead of the September profit warning. Mr Jansen said the company had not been contacted by the DTI.

The sharp drop in profits was on the back of a small rise

in sales from £2 billion to £2.1 billion. Acquisitions contributed £150.8 million to sales and £12 million to pre-exceptional operating profits.

Mr Jansen said action was taken as soon as the downturns in the major markets had been identified. "We have accelerated our cost reduction programme, which will be largely completed by the end of the first quarter of 1996," he said.

The programme is expected to reap cost benefits of about £25 million in addition to the £25 million cost savings already achieved last year.

All but one of the group's

Apple set for \$700m first-quarter loss

BY RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

APPLE COMPUTER expects to incur a \$700 million loss in the first quarter, although its chairman said the company's problems were "fixable". As the shares plunged to a low of \$23.8, against more than \$50 last summer, Gilbert Amelio, the new chairman, gave a gloomy outlook for the next few months, with revenues and shipments substantially below last year's levels, and millions of dollars of old inventory left unsold.

Although the computer group had given warning that the current quarter's loss total for the year of 9.5p. The shares rose 1p to 204p.

million loss for the final quarter of last year, Wall Street had not expected such a large deficit. The company said that it was due to inventory write-downs and restructuring charges, which include axing about 1,300 employees earlier this year.

"I'm confident at this point that I know what the problems are and that they are fixable," said Mr Amelio. Apple would unveil its plans for recovery by early May, he added. The latest loss is a further blow to investor confidence in Apple, which suspended the previous quarter's dividend.

BARRATT Developments, the housebuilder, is raising £90 million through a rights issue to fund an increase in its land bank, aimed at raising output from 7,000 homes a year to 11,000 in the next three years.

Barratt is offering one new share for every four held at 20p each in its first cash call since 1982. Two new divisions will be established, one in Central London, another in the Thames Valley.

Announcing a 19 per cent increase in half-year profits to £19.1 million before tax, Sir Lawrie Barratt, chairman, said that the company would continue to increase market share even in the absence of a turnaround in the housing

market. He reported net reservations up 7.5 per cent in revenue terms. Sir Lawrie, scornful of suggestions that Barratt would use the funds to take over other housebuilders, said: "We will look at them as a route to buy land but we won't pay a premium to anyone. You should get a discount for buying in bulk."

The company sold 3,002 houses in the half year to December, 12 per cent up on the previous year, at an average price of £81,600 and increase its land bank to 18,991 units. The interim dividend of 2.75p, up 10 per cent and covered 2.5 times by earnings.

Tempus, page 28

Go ahead
you can rely on us

This number testifies to the trust thousands of fund managers and individuals have put in AXA in 23 countries worldwide.



MICHAEL CLARK

Ladbroke shares buoyed by persistent bid talk

TALK of a bid for Ladbroke, the struggling hotel and betting group, refuses to go away. The shares put in a late spurt to finish 2p dearer at 88p as almost three million changed hands. Once again, they are perched a shade below their high for the past year, with talk of an imminent bid still doing the rounds in the Square Mile.

This latest burst of speculative buying coincides with comments from Steve Bollenbach, head of the Hilton Corporation, which owns the Hilton chain of hotels in the US. He wants the two Hilton chains merged under one roof. Ladbroke owns all the Hilton Hotels outside the US.

City speculators fear that if a bid for Ladbroke is not forthcoming soon, a major correction in the share price is on the cards. At these levels, Ladbroke is capitalised at £2.1 billion.

The rest of the equity market found the going tough. Prices were squeezed higher, but genuine retail demand was thin. Turnover fell just short of a billion shares, having been artificially bolstered by special situations.

The FTSE 100 index finished 11.5 higher at 3,672.4, having been almost 16 points higher before the start of trading on Wall Street.

Grey-market dealings in Orange, the mobile phone operator, got off to a flying start, as expected. Offered at 20p, the top end of the range, the shares started life at 24p. After briefly touching 24p, they ended at 23.7p, a premium of 32p. Official trading starts on Tuesday.

Orange was floated off by its joint owners, British Aerospace, up 13p at 88p, and Hutchison Whampoa, of Hongkong, and is now valued at £2.5 billion.

Much of yesterday's demand stemmed from big institutions, including index-tracking funds looking to steal a march before the group is eventually admitted to the index. By the close of business, a total of 68.7 million shares had changed hands.

The demand for Orange took some of the shine off Vodafone, with the price losing 3p to 244.2p as 7 million shares changed hands. Enterprise Oil responded to a strong oil price with a rise of 19p to 442p on turnover of two million shares. The cold winter in Europe and increased tension in the Middle East has



David Yeomans, chairman of TLS, with Peter Roberts, chief executive, and Peter Busby, finance director

lifted the price of oil to about £22 a barrel. Heavy turnover was also recorded in Iceland, the frozen food retailer, after it announced details of its share buy-back programme. The group bought back a total of 27 million shares at 15p in a move designed to boost earnings a share. This helped to boost turnover by the close to 55 million shares.

News came from Aegis, the media group, of the departure of 9 per cent stakeholder Omnicom. The Americans came in at around 20p in 1993 and had taken a full bid but, citing client conflicts with Aegis, are taking their profits. Better than expected results restricted the damage to the shares to a 1p fall at 46 1/4p.

Aegis' ipo firm at 203p, was talking to brokers yesterday giving them a rundown of trading conditions. John Clark, chief executive, told them that its six key operating areas would achieve sales growth of 14 per cent and an 11.5 per cent in operating margins. BET is the target of an unwanted £1.8 billion bid from Rentokil. Mr Clark said

that the present management could obtain better returns on the business. But the market is waiting for Rentokil to raise its offer to around 215p a share, which may be enough to guarantee success. Rentokil rose 2p to 355p.

Barratt Developments fell 7p to 232p after asking shareholders to stump up an extra £90 million to fund opportuni-

ties in the housebuilding market. It's raising the money via a one-for-four rights issue at 200p. Sir Lawrie Barratt, chairman, said he was encouraged by the increased stability of house prices. The news coincided with better than expected half year figures showing pre-tax profits £3 million up at £19.1 million. But not everyone is feeling so

sharp falls in profitability left Bowthorpe 10p down at 420p but failed to depress Caradon, up 1p at 204p, and Croda 11p better at 326p. TLS, the vehicle hire group, closed 4p up at record high of 80p after unveiling a rise in full year pre-tax profits from £1.7 million to £4.15 million.

■ GILT EDGED: Attempts at extending Tuesday's gains failed. The market tried to go better on a number of occasions, helped by a positive response to the auction, which was 2.64 times oversubscribed and some useful US durable goods numbers. In spite of lack of demand, the Bank of England exhausted remaining supplies of the "tap" Treasury Index Linked 2s per cent 2009. In the futures pit, the June series of the Long Gilt slipped a tick to £104.271s as a total of 57,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 was steady at £96.11s, while at the shorter end, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was up 1s at £102.1s.

■ NEW YORK: The Dow Jones industrial average was down at midday. It fell 11.92 to 5,658.67.

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THE TIMES



CITY DIARY

Win some, lose some

JAGUAR will go to Birmingham, thanks to an agreement reached by the Department of Trade and Industry and the European Commission yesterday, but the real deal was struck in the privacy of a box at Murrayfield at the beginning of March. When Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, and fellow-secret Alex Trotman, president of Ford Jaguar, watched their beloved rusty team lose to England, the decision to take 1,300 jobs and a £400 million investment to Birmingham was secured. It was as the two men commented over Scotland's defeat that they sealed Ford's commitment to make Jaguars in Britain, in spite of the European Commission's willy-nilly shilly-shallying over its £80 million aid package.

Pot du jour

ONLY foolhardy foodies would take the advice of the new *Egon Ronay's Guide 1996 Oriental Restaurants*, which singles out British Beef Mussaman as this year's winning dish. A panel of judges from Egon Ronay and the Meat & Livestock Commission dived head first for the dish of thinly sliced beef in a peanut butter curry, which was prepared in Yum Yum, the Thai restaurant, by Oriental Chef of the Year Atique Choudry. The panel's decision was made last autumn.



JAMES CAPEL analysts are clearly great beef eaters. The winners in this fortnight's stock selection, paraded in its fortnightly newsletter, include *Harrison's & Crosfield*, which has exposure to animal feeds and Northern Foods, which handles milk and meat products. Then there's *TGN*, which has links with asbestos, and the financial company with the unfortunate name of *Cattle*.

Smoke alarm

IN THESE health conscious days, smoking has become a minority habit for all but a handful of public figures. The cigar-smoking Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is one notable exception as is Bank Governor Eddie George. Now steady Eddie, a seasoned cigarette smoker, is getting a soul mate when lawyer Tricia Howe, assistant director of the Serious Fraud Office, takes her highly rated fraudbusting skills to the Bank's prosecutions department.

Self service

GARDNER Merchant, the UK's largest caterer, which packs 3,000 business-size lunch boxes for the Institute of Directors conference at the Royal Albert Hall every year, is now assembling buffet-size boxes for ravenous theatregoers. Since the introduction of eat-in-the-seat hampers went down so well with the audience at *Passion* in the Queens Theatre last night, Stoll Moss, the West End theatre group, hopes to take its idea to the English National Opera. The grub, including canapés, smoked salmon sandwiches and truffles, costs £12.50 with champagne or £20 with champagne and can be ordered with your tickets.

MORAG PRESTON

Hong Kong becomes a magnet for foreign cash

Philip Bowring on British pension fund investment in the colony

It's one of those items that really belongs in Ripley's *Believe It Not*. Whether future British retirees still smarting from the Robert Maxwell episode would be amused by it is debatable. But it is a fact that British pension funds have almost as much money invested in the tiny Hong Kong stock market as in the whole of the US. Indeed, the figure probably rose because of the frenzied foreign buying of Hong Kong shares in the first weeks of this year.

Peking's threats against Hong Kong's constitutional arrangements and Taiwan have underlined the political dangers to an economy that depends so much on international confidence and China's relations with the West rather than on what it produces.

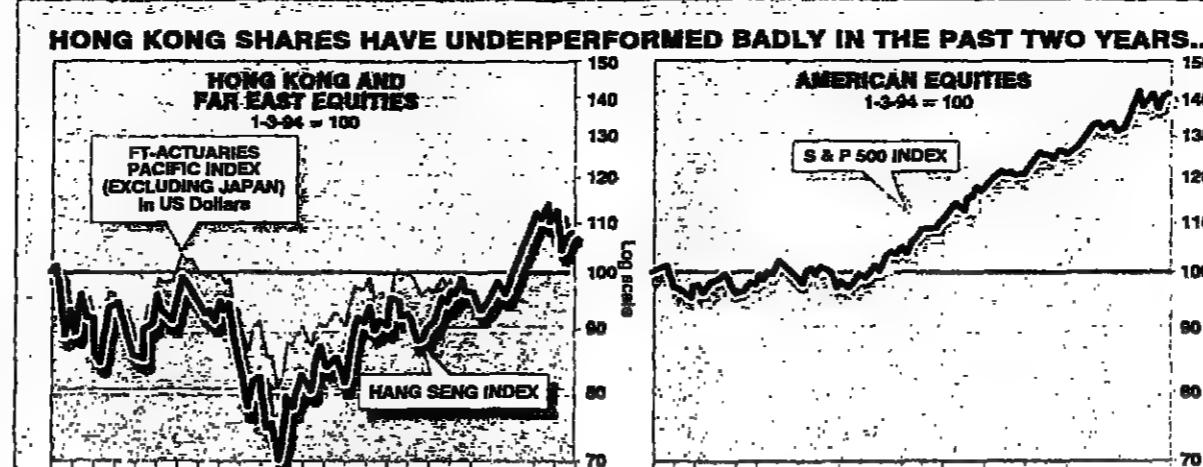
Forgetting politics, Hong Kong is ludicrously over-weighted. According to figures on UK pension fund asset allocation, these funds in the last quarter of 1995 had 5.8 per cent of their total assets invested in the markets grouped under the heading "Pacific Rim excluding Japan", an increase from 4.8 per cent a year earlier. By contrast, just 2.9 per cent were in the US.

Data from Pacific Rim and Asia ex-Japan mutual funds and anecdotal evidence indicates that the norm for such funds is to invest 35-40 per cent of assets in Hong Kong. Salomon Brothers recently recommended a 42 per cent HK weighting for Asia ex-Japan.

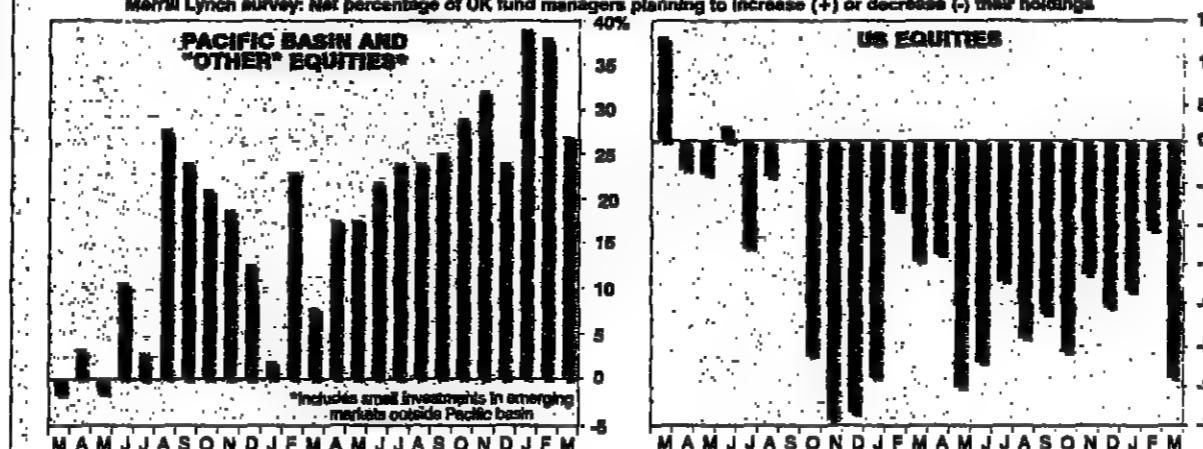
On the basis of the figures, UK pension funds would now have a total exposure to Hong Kong of about 2.5 per cent of total assets. Add in holdings in Singapore, which normally account for at least 15 per cent of Rim portfolios, and the exposure to two city states exceeds that to the capitalist world's premier market. The two have a combined GDP of about one 40th that of the US.

This bizarre fact poses questions about the judgment of highly paid management groups. Just why is Hong Kong such a magnet for foreign money? In the short term, foreign fund managers' bullish attitudes to Hong Kong contrast with the wariness of local investors facing an economic slowdown, the uncertainties of 1997, and regional tensions. Recently, Hong Kong companies have been able to get away with huge share placements to foreign institutions that would have sent shudders through the market if offered as rights to existing local shareholders.

On a longer view, Hong Kong companies have performed well in terms of earnings growth. But presumably the fund managers have some inkling of the fact that most major Hong Kong companies owe their high levels profitability to the oligarchical arrangements that prevail in Hong Kong's property, banking and utility sectors and to



Merrill Lynch survey: Net percentage of UK fund managers planning to increase (+) or decrease (-) their holdings



asset-price inflation occasioned by years of negative real interest rates that have only recently ended. They may also have noticed that over the years asset-price inflation has been helped along by a weak currency. The Hong Kong dollar has fallen 50 per cent against sterling.

So why should fund managers prefer these stocks to US markets with their vast array of leading-edge global firms, high-tech leaders and a huge domestic market for everyone or to Asian countries that have better economic growth records and prospects? There is a certain amount of self-fulfilling prophecy in the managers' behaviour – in a relatively small market such as Hong Kong. A rising market attracts more funds and justifies the original position. But with foreign institutions taking a larger and larger share of the Hong Kong market, the medium-term dangers of foreign ownership are serious. Contrary to received wisdom in London, Hong Kong is not a small shareholders' paradise. That may have been the case once, but only 10 per cent of Hong Kong's population own shares directly and mutual funds are not popular with the locals. Local individuals now account, according to the HK Stock Exchange, for only 30 per cent of local turnover. Thirty per cent is directly foreign and another 30 per cent is down local institutions, which in many cases are foreign owned and acting for foreign investors.

Foreigners account for some 60 per cent of this market in stocks which, with a few exceptions, derive their profits almost entirely from Hong Kong.

Hong Kong gets an inordinate amount of the fund flows

whenever "emerging markets" or "Asia" become hot themes. This applies almost as much to US investors as Britons. The Americans pumped US\$6 billion into Hong Kong in 1993 and 1994 and returned with a vengeance in late 1995 after a lull. These are huge sums and entirely disproportionate to a territory of six million people. Most HK companies are primarily dependent on Hong Kong for their earnings – whatever may be the future promise of China. If China really is the draw, why the cold shoulder to China's B and H shares that provide an entrée into the real China of industrial production and growing markets, not the ersatz China of Hong Kong.

One answer fund managers

backs, Hong Kong is the best place in the region to base fund management operations. Managers, being human, tend to believe they live at the centre of the world. Singapore and Malaysia, with their colonial linkages of language, laws and schools ride naturally on some aspects of the cultural bandwagon.

A big problem with rational asset allocation is the weighting of self-styled international industries that often omit Korea and Taiwan because they deem them insufficiently open. As a result, funds seeking to track the indices ignore major economies and pile into little ones.

So many funds are more concerned with judging each other by short-term performance or against indices that they inevitably ignore altogether or seriously underweight the larger and more dynamic economies like those of Korea, even when they have active markets. Some pension funds have genuine legal difficulty with foreign exchange regulations in South Korea and Taiwan. But if choice of indices of Asia are to be so distorted, it is no wonder that the asset allocations will be too. Thus funds end up with billions worth of property and other Hong Kong companies that are nothing outside their little territory but look askance at the region's manufacturing giants.

Cultural factors are strongly in evidence too. Hong Kong has all the leading Anglo (Teutonic)-American firms of brokers and fund managers who like to deal with the familiar – that is each other. They are the ones who give Hong Kong blue-chips liquidity. Even without (or because of) a lack of control on kick-

Contrary to received wisdom in London, Hong Kong is not a small shareholders' paradise

will give is that Hong Kong is an open and liquid market. But it is no bigger than Taiwan. True, it is more open to foreigners, but Singapore attracts much investment in spite of restrictions on foreign ownership of top companies that have led to foreign institutions paying huge premiums for a presence.

Pension funds, one might suppose, were investing for the long term not for fast in-and-out profit for the benefit of their beneficiaries rather than the brokers. Other economies have infinitely better claims to being the cutting edge of the new Asia. Hong Kong is a narrowly focused market in a mature economy. It shares with Malaysia and Singapore (thanks to the foreigners) a market capitalisation to GDP ratio of well over 200 per cent – far higher than found elsewhere in the world. Unlike

BUSINESS LETTERS

Return to apprenticeships needed

From Mr Thomas P. Hartley Sir, Today's business section contains a report, "Bosses worried over education of job applicants, March 25." on the IoD's study regarding the failure of the education system to provide suitable candidates for industrial training, and on the facing page, a report "Too few firms have a training budget" on research which suggests a dearth of training places for those who do qualify.

Both reports make sad reading. It is time for a sense of urgency to be injected into both education and vocational training. Why not a return to the rigours of a formal system of apprenticeship training which

From Mr A. J. F. Hill

Sir, It isn't only the Lloyd's names who are displeased by the recent settlement proposals. There are now about 3,200 executors who are personally liable for the deceased names' debts.

Some of them, such as myself, act for an estate that is not protected by estate plan protection. For us, a settle-

The cure for telecommunication ills

From Mr Bill Dixon Sir, The UK telecommunications industry is in trouble. Twelve years of tinkering with competition at the boundary level leaves BT with a dominant market share, reinforced by the control it exerts over its competitors as the main supplier of interconnect.

The price reductions achieved by regulation are nothing special for a high-tech business. Regulation is ever more interventionist and adversarial: BT cannot take ordinary management decisions about its products and prices, while competitors find it difficult to enter the market without the appropriate

dispensations from Ofcom. Ofcom itself cannot cope. In effect, telecommunications is being run by an overburdened government bureaucracy which tells the industry what to do. We are back to square one. Uncertainty and delay are damaging the confidence of new entrants and suppressing the development and adoption of new technology. Britain's worldwide status as an innovator in telecommunications is fading fast.

The one sure-fire cure for all ills is to break up BT. Surely a formula can be arrived at which makes this acceptable to BT as well as to everyone else.

Yours faithfully
BILL DIXON
Partner
Dixon, Goodwin & Co
Osbourne House
Beckets Wharf
Lower Teddington Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey

Letters to the Business section of The Times can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

Executors liable for dead names' debts

required satisfactory results in both skill and educational achievement, measured by external examination. The result would be a certificate of competence allowing the holder to enter a closed system as a registered practitioner.

A combination of daytime work and evening education, not only weeds out non-operators, but instils in those with ambition and self motivation, a sense of responsibility and a desire to progress towards desirable personal goals.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS P. HARTLEY,
Blandford Cottage,
23 Blandford Road,
Reigate, Surrey.

Lloyd's – just expected to sanction the losses – or pay them personally if we trust that the Equitas arrangements as proposed will be adequate – and subsequently find they are not.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN HILL
Executor to J. K. Hill
8 Ebner Street.
SW1.

Labour sets the agenda for a skill revolution

Philip Bassett on the Opposition's controversial training plans

Today, the Labour party will say: "We believe that government does have a responsibility to set the framework for a skills revolution, and to play a role in making that happen." A Labour government will accept the responsibility which the Tories have shunned."

Bold words from the Labour party's new policy proposals, to be unveiled today. It will set out key proposals on training which business leaders have been eager to hear.

But some traditional Labour supporters, trade union leaders, for instance, see the final, formal abandonment of a commitment to a training levy on employers who fail to train, as yet another retrograde step by new Labour. John Edmonds of the GMB general union, views the move away from the five guaranteed days training a year in the document *The Skills Revolution – Preparing Britain for the 21st Century*, as a step in the wrong direction, and is understood to have made his views known to party leaders at a private meeting. Careful work has gone on in recent weeks with such sceptics, but

people might be able to use smart cards to buy training, together with linking companies attaining the training-based Investors in People standard – has incentives, though critics argue it ducks the deadweight problem: how do you avoid giving free government money to companies which already train, or conversely why should such companies be penalised for training if a way is found of directing help only at firms which do not train.

Critics see the starting point as the need to scrap the stick of the training levy in favour of the carrot of individual and enterprise-level incentives.

Labour argues that current training provision in Britain is fragmented, unsuited to the needs of the labour market and largely ignored. Key Labour figures have been made aware of research showing that four-fifths of companies in Britain do not train their workforces, not because they are opposed to training – but because they are operating in product

markets which simply do not need higher skill levels for profitability.

However short-term that view is, it is dominant in Britain, especially among small firms. Britain's training problem does not lie with Marks & Spencer or ICI but with the vast swathe of companies who know they can get by without training.

A training levy was meant to address just this problem by forcing companies to train, or face a fine. But the levy did not achieve that. Labour says that the levy system reinforced rigid sectoral barriers, failed to cover many employment areas altogether, was highly bureaucratic and could not match the training performance of some of Britain's key competitors. But where sectors still want to keep their boards and their levers, such as engineering construction and building, Labour says the levy will remain in place – a point which the party will say demonstrates clearly its intention to work with industry and not against it. Labour's twofold

plan – tax incentives for employees to take up individual learning accounts (ILAs), under which

having won support for the document from Labour's national executive yesterday, the party leadership is preparing to go public today with what some clearly view as a typical watering down of previous solid commitments.

Probably of greater importance is the criticism which says that the paper describes and analyses well the scale of the training gap facing Britain, but then puts forward a series of policy proposals which are flagrantly insufficient to meet it.

Critics see the starting point as the need to scrap the stick of the training levy in favour of the carrot of individual and enterprise-level incentives.

For its part, the Labour leadership is convinced it has found a winner with the proposals, which it is convinced will find strong favour with both business and individuals. "In five years' time," says one key new Labour adviser, "people will look back on this as a turning point. That's how important to business, the economy and to individual people our training proposals will be."

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Industry groups fail on reform, says study

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government's attempt to reform Britain's patchwork of trade associations has so far largely failed, the first study of trade bodies in the UK suggests today. The study, by the head of a major association, says that the organisations must become more effective.

Michael Heseltine, while President of the Board of Trade, called for reform of Britain's many, often-competing trade associations, urging them to rationalise themselves, and warning them that the Government would deal with only the lead association in a sector to simplify its relations with industry. However, today's study suggests that little has so far come from Mr Heseltine's initiative — in particular, from the Government.

The study says: "There is, as yet, little evidence that the Department of Trade and Industry has sought to encourage rationalisation... The Department generally does not appear to have increased the extent to which it comments on the effectiveness of trade associations, still less has it dealt only with one trade association in a particular field."

The study, by Mark Boleat, Director-General of the Association of British Insurers, Britain's largest trade association in terms of subscription income, also questions the functions for trade associations suggested by Mr Heseltine — in particular, the idea of their working to increase international competitiveness, which, it says, is "irrelevant" for many smaller associations.

Although the study recognises the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of such bodies, it says that further reforms are essential if they are to promote and represent British industry properly.

It says that there are now about 1,300 trade associations in Britain, with total subscription income of about £270 million a year. Thirteen each have income in excess of £3 million.

Mr Boleat reveals details of CBI membership levels, putting them at more than 250,000 public and private companies, and more than 200 trade associations, employers' bodies and other commercial organisations.

Mr Boleat urges trade associations to be fully engaged in the political process, and says: "Members should be kept fully informed about the current political and regulatory framework to ensure that policy views coming forward have not been developed in a vacuum. Many trade associations fall down this hurdle."

□ *Trade Association Strategy and Management*, by Mark Boleat (Association of British Insurers, 5, Gresham Street, London EC2; £15)

SIB chief urges bank reforms

By ROBERT MILLER

THE threat posed to the international banking and monetary systems by failures such as those of Barings and Daiwa must be tackled by improved cross-border co-operation between supervisors, markets and the industry itself, the UK's most senior watchdog said yesterday.

Speaking at a conference in Tokyo, Sir Andrew Large, the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board, told delegates that banks and securities firms must be encouraged to develop better standards of practice in accounting and disclosure.

In future, such businesses should prepare their consolidated accounts in a common way and to internationally agreed accounting standards. Sir Andrew said.



Jim Rawson, left, with Paul Hazel, finance director, has seen profits decline at Epwin

Epwin dips as costs rise

TOUGH trading in the market for u-PVC windows and building products, together with a sharp rise in the cost of raw materials, reduced pre-tax profits at Epwin Group 18 per cent to £5.1 million (£6.2 million) in 1995. Earnings fell to 15.5p (18p) a share. A final dividend of 6p lifts the total to 8.9p. The shares rose 2p to 21p. Jim Rawson, chairman, said relative stability in raw material costs and selective price increases would help to improve margins.

Monument plans £50m return

By CARL MORTISHED

MONUMENT OIL & GAS, the exploration company with a large interest in the Liverpool Bay gas field, proposes to return £50 million of capital to shareholders. The payment to investors, amounting to 7.5p per share and equivalent to almost a third of the published net assets, will be made after the interim results in August.

At the same time, investors in Nirex Resources, Monument's 38 per cent sharehold-

er, will swap their shares for equivalent numbers of shares in Monument. The Nirex investors include Tony Craven Walker, founder and chief executive of Monument, and Groupe Bruxelles Lambert and Electra Investment Trust.

Monument has decided to shrink just as gas production starts in Liverpool Bay, a development which will substantially increase the cash flow of the oil company. Mr

Craven Walker said the change of capital structure would be accompanied by a shift in emphasis towards exploration with plans to spend £20 million per year.

Monument raised its net profits 61 per cent to £12 million last year. It is not paying a dividend but does not rule out future dividends or share repurchases.

Tempus, page 30

A brief encounter with principles

Peter Holgate believes the ASB needs to highlight genuine and fundamental guidelines

TO BASE the development of accounting standards on a set of underlying principles seems an eminently sensible idea. At the end of the 1980s it was widely agreed that the new standard-setter (the Accounting Standards Board, which came into being in 1990) should base its work on coherent principles, and thereby avoid the ad hoc, firefighting approach for which its predecessor had been criticised.

Through such small steps is the world improved — or so it seemed until recently. In late 1995 the ASB published for comment a draft of the entire Statement. The public furor that followed has unfortunately obscured some of the key issues, and the time is right to turn to those.

Despite some major concerns about the content of the Statement of principles in its current draft, we certainly back the ASB in developing one. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, a Statement of principles seems to be one of the best ways to foster international harmonisation: if the underlying principles are the same or similar, then there is good chance that the detailed rules and their application in practice should be likewise. Secondly, the existence of clear principles should mean that it is not nec-

essary to be too prescriptive in individual standards.

But there are some concerns. The most basic question is: what are principles? In other words, what sort of content, and how much content, would we expect to find? Our observations in this regard are threefold.

First, at 132 pages, the Statement is too long. The Ten Commandments take less than a page, the Cadbury Code takes two pages and the Auditing Practices Board's recent "Auditors' Code" takes three.

Closer to home, an early accounting standard (SSAP 2) sets out the four fundamental concepts (going concern, accruals, consistency and prudence) in less than one page. The Companies Act sets out the requirement for accounts to give a true and fair view in the same space. This is not to argue that the Statement of principles should be less than two pages long; business life has moved on and there is a good case for more guidance. It is rather a case of finding a happy medium between two pages and 132.

Our second concern is about the type of content. Yes, there has been concern about whether certain proposed principles are the right ones. People have criticised the balance sheet approach, the em-



Peter Holgate says brevity is essential to setting standards

phasis on current value information and the so-called "recognition criteria" which could lead to more assets and liabilities on balance sheet.

Some of these proposed principles are radical and it is right that they are given a full debate at this stage. That debate is longer than this column and is currently taking place in comprehensive submission to the ASB. But

while genuine principles merit a proper debate, that does not mean the ASB is right in including in the draft some other ideas that are put forward as principles but are in reality the ASB's planned reforms for specific subjects.

Proposals on accounting for goodwill, the use of equity accounting and proportional consolidations, and the relative roles of the profit and loss

account and the total gains statement fall into this category.

They are implementation issues, not principles, and indeed some of them appeared last week in their rightful place — a financial reporting exposure draft. Fred II.

The third concern is where some of the fundamental concepts have gone. The Statement supports the idea of consistency but gives insufficient emphasis to the fundamental concepts of prudence, going concern and accruals, which, in our view should continue to be recognised as generally accepted principles of good accounting.

Even the concept of financial statements needing to give a "true and fair view" appears to be incidental to the Statement. This is so even though it is the overriding legal requirement relating to accounts and a considerable exposure. In our view it should remain at the core of the UK accounting.

To summarise, principles are well worth developing and setting out publicly. The ASB should do so. But it should concentrate on genuine principles, select the most fundamental and set them out as briefly as possible.

Peter Holgate is accounting technical partner with Coopers & Lybrand and contributing editor of The Coopers & Lybrand Manual of Accounting Books, £180, PO Box 620, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 2ZX or telephone 01908 248000.

Not a good holiday read

IT is time for the captains of industry to tremble in their boots again. Terry Smith, the analyst who shattered the peace in 1992 by publishing a devastating critique of creative accounting, is at it again. In 1992 his book *Accounting for Growth*, subtitled "stripping the camouflage from company accounts", caused a sensation in the City. Many a chairman

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Laptop espionage

NOW it can be revealed. The partners who get ahead at Price Waterhouse can read upside down. A note on security in the latest issue of PW's staff newspaper warns everyone to be careful with business papers and laptops when travelling. "Audit and business advisory services people are

experts at reading upside down", it says. But it also reveals a coup of its own. "A PW partner actually reviewed the budget of another Big Six firm on a train", it reported.

Biting words

IT was clear where the sympathies of John Roques, the Deloitte & Touche senior part-

ner, lay at last week's seminar on auditor liability. Not for nothing is he known as The Rottweiler. He introduced Professor Andrew Burrows of the Law Commission to make the case for not allowing accounting firms any reform of the laws on audit liability and said that afterwards his fellow partner, John Magill, would make some concluding comments: "Hopefully they will be derisory", he said.

ROBERT BRUCE

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Healthcall steps up investment level

HEALTHCALL GROUP, the healthcare services company, is accelerating investment in primary care centres, anticipating an increase in demand for its services from general practitioners. GPs have launched a public awareness campaign to curb public demand for their services and primary care centres are being offered as an alternative to a home visit.

Healthcall yesterday reported a 23 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £7.9 million in 1995, its first full year as a listed company, from £6.39 million in 1994. Proforma earnings rose 11 per cent to 9.2p a share. The total dividend is increased 10 per cent to 4.95p a share, with a 3.3p final due on May 14.

Builders look to 1997

THE output of the construction industry, which fell 1 per cent last year, is likely to bottom out this year and pick up in 1997, with recovery led by the private commercial and industrial sector and repair and maintenance work, according to Cambridge Econometrics. Lower interest rates and an increase of work from the Private Finance Initiative would help. Private work had the brightest growth prospects, fuelled partly by lottery funded projects, though industrial work was vulnerable to a sharper slowdown in European export markets.

Asda Property higher

AGAINST a background of generally falling property values, Asda Property Holdings, the investment company, achieved a modest 1 per cent increase in net asset value to 150p a share in 1995. Profits rose to a record £8.9 million before tax last year from £8.3 million, with net rental income advancing to £14.28 million from £12.8 million. Earnings were 6.5p a share, compared with 6.7p, although there was a 9 per cent rise in underlying earnings. The total dividend is 8 per cent higher at 2.6p a share, with a final 1.8p. The shares fell 3p to 139p.

TLS drives ahead

TLS, the supplier of rental vehicles which has 17 branches nationwide, saw profits rise sharply to £4.1 million before tax last year from £1.71 million in 1994. Earnings were 7.9p a share, compared with 3.6p. The total dividend rises to 2.7p a share from 1.5p, with a final 1.85p due on May 24. The company also said a conservative accounting policy on vehicle rebates resulted in a carry forward of deferred income into 1996 and 1997 of £4.8 million, compared with £2.6 million in 1995.

Sherwood rises to £17m

SHERWOOD GROUP, the garment and lace manufacturer, increased profits to £17.2 million before tax from £15.1 million in 1995, despite a 15 per cent decline in the contribution from the garment division as a result of weak consumer demand and the extended summer. Earnings rose to 8.9p a share from 7.9p. The total dividend is increased 12.5 per cent to 3.6p a share, with a final 2.3p, due on May 22. The company said sales outside Europe grew by 24 per cent.

Sunshine lifts Nichols

HOT summer weather helped J M Nichols, the producer of Vimto soft drink, to raise full-year profits by 6 per cent to £9.6 million, despite a 15 per cent decline in the contribution from the garment division as a result of weak consumer demand and the extended summer. Overall turnover increased by 15 per cent to £65.4 million. The company's share price closed unchanged at 215p. The total dividend was increased by 7.8 per cent to 6.63p. A final dividend of 4.3p is payable on May 20.

Fairness issue must be on the agenda

THE English ICA issued an excellent summation of the arguments over professional liability last week. It called the discussion paper *Finding a Fair Solution*. And that would appear to be the real problem at the heart of all the arguments over finding a way of dealing with litigation, blame and liability among auditors. When you talk to the lawyers involved in what seems facetiously to be known as "reform" of the issue, you find that fairness is the last thing on the agenda. Indeed, the lawyers concerned would prefer it not to be on the agenda at all.

The issue for the profession is a simple one. If a company goes bust through fraud or the incompetence of its directors, everyone involved is, under the present law, jointly and severally liable. But shareholders and their lawyers know that there is no point in suing the directors for having left the company a shambles. There would not be enough small change left in the directors' pockets to provide restitution. So the auditors, as the only ones who legally have to be insured, are the only deep pockets into which the shareholders and their lawyers can dip. The problem then is blame. Sometimes the auditors are to blame as well as the directors, sometimes not.

The only constant is that the auditors get sued for the lot each time. This is what is unfair. A system of proportionate liability, where blame and liability are apportioned, would seem a fair reform. Had the authors of the discussion paper been at a seminar on the topic organised by Deloitte & Touche the night before publication they would have realised quite how distant the concept of fairness is from the hearts and, more importantly, the minds, of the lawyers involved.

The main event was an address by Andrew Burrows, of the Law Commission, on his feasibility investigation of joint and several liability. This is the report that has deeply embarrassed the Department of Trade and Industry. Professor Burrows and his team came to the conclusion that there was no case to consider and, as there was therefore no point in making a full report, the feasibility study should be published. This the DTI did last month. It was then horrified at the outraged reaction. A damage-limitation exercise ensued. The DTI distanced itself from the report, emphasised that it was for consultation only, and that it certainly did not neces-

sarily agree with the report's conclusions. This last action is not a difficult one. Anyone with any knowledge of business life can see that the report's conclusions are at best theory and at worst nonsense. What has been difficult to understand is how such conclusions could have been reached. In every sophisticated business nation, the legal profession is moving towards some sort of proportionate liability. Australia and the US already have.

But anyone present at the seminar now knows the answer to why the Burrows report came to its strange conclusion. Professor Burrows provided the key. And he hammered it home over and over. He is not prepared to allow the concept of justice to get in the way of a legal principle. "The Law Commission is entirely composed of lawyers", he said. "We see the world through the eyes of the lawyers.

We are not in the business of politically driven, pragmatic reform. If there is to be a solution, it must be politically driven and pragmatic." And as a lawyer he would wash his hands of anything so incorrect. Only the people he referred to as "policy-makers" could provide such an unprincipled thing as a solution.

He dismissed the reforms in the US securities law, which allow a limited form of proportionate liability, as "a politically-driven pragmatic approach". But for his mild-mannered delivery, you would not have been surprised if he had told us that the principle of proportionate liability was the work of the devil. He said that he was "extremely disappointed that proportionate liability is put across as so obvious a reform with only the lawyers standing obstinately in the way".

To their credit, many members of the audience, which was composed mostly of lawyers, said later they were deeply embarrassed by the evening. But at least everything is now clear. The commission was driven simply by the textbooks. Any idea that the concept of justice might influence its decisions was deemed to be dangerously pragmatic.

Everyone involved in the debate should empty their minds of anything the commission said. The DTI, to its credit, sees the report as only a starting point in the debate. Everyone involved should now take the idea of finding a fair solution as their guiding principle. It is certainly a fairer principle than anything the legal academics could come up with.

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• spending
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Shares fail to hold best levels

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565	567	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		569	570	Carlsberg	29	5.1	15.3		502	505	Mobile Systems	47	2.2	27.3	
562	563	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		571	572	Charles Schlesinger	29	3.1	15.3		503	505	Motorola	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		573	574	Chivas Sobeys	29	3.1	15.3		504	505	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		575	576	Cook (G)	29	3.1	15.3		505	506	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
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567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		633	634	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		534	535	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		635	636	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		535	536	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		637	638	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		536	537	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		639	640	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		537	538	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		641	642	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		538	539	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		643	644	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		539	540	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		645	646	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		540	541	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		647	648	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		541	542	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
567	569	Baron's	115	2.5	11.5		649	650	Corporation	29	3.1	15.3		542	543	Motorway	47	2.2	27.3	
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■ FILM 1

Director Tim Robbins takes a giant stride forward in his powerful new *Dead Man Walking*



■ FILM 2

... while action maestro Renny Harlin takes a giant stride back in the clichéd pirate flick *Cutthroat Island*



■ FILM 3

Steve Martin dares to duplicate the immortal Phil Silvers, in the vulgar Hollywood remake *Sgt Bilko*



■ FILM 4

A wolf-dog as hero and plenty of snow, but the animated feature *Balto* doesn't add up to much

An eye for the irony, a tooth for the truth

CINEMA: Geoff Brown pays his respects to the honest, uncompromising, Oscar-winning *Dead Man Walking*

Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn size up each other in a New Orleans prison. Sarandon, winner of this year's Best Actress Oscar, sits brimming with naive good intentions, trying to be a friend. Penn stares back with a cocky grin, a sculpted goatee, a tight little moustache and hair that don't want to mess with.

He stands convicted of killing two teenagers in Lovers' Lane after raping the girl and stabbing her 17 times. His partner had a better lawyer and got life imprisonment, but Penn's Matthew Poncelet sits on death row. He is surly, hard-hearted, a racist who thinks Hitler went just a bit too far; not an attractive hero. But then *Dead Man Walking* is not interested in parcelling up characters and plot in the conventional Hollywood way. Inspired by Sister Helen Prejean's account of her dealings with Louisiana prisoners, Tim Robbins's powerful film faces up squarely to the conflicts and irony of capital punishment, which inflicts cruel death on those convicted of inflicting the same.

Does Poncelet have a soul to save? Sarandon's Sister Helen believes so. As part of her brief to minister to the New Orleans poor, she visits Poncelet in prison. Although Robbins's script makes visits to the murder scene, the grieving families and the chillingly clinical execution chamber, the film's heart lies in these meetings between two faces, two different worlds, variously separated by grilles, bars or Perspex.

Sarandon is infinitely subtle in her emotional responses: her big brown eyes have rarely gazed with such penetration. She makes Sister Helen no plaster saint, but a fallible human being, tainted with arrogance. She does not hide behind make-up; nor does the prison hide behind gothic shadows. Warm lighting creates an ordinary, bland environment, which packs its own

Dead Man Walking
Warner West End
15, 122 mins
Powerful death row drama

Cutthroat Island
Warner West End
PG, 125 mins
Redundant and miscast pirate movie

Sgt Bilko
Empire, PG, 95 mins
Unwelcome spin-off from the TV classic

Balto
Plaza, U, 78 mins
Ineffective cartoon set in Alaska

Dunston Checks In
Odeon West End
PG, 88 mins
Have with an orange-utan in a five-star hotel

Lawnmower Man 2: Beyond Cyberspace
Odeon West End
12, 92 mins
Moderate high-tech fantasy

earie punch. As for Penn, none of his past performances matches the intensity of his work here. You might not wish to meet Poncelet in an alley, but on a cinema screen this complex scoundrel, remorse buried deep beneath hate, is a fascinating character.

To some extent Poncelet is the film's own invention: Robbins (see interview below) took two real-life prisoners, one amiable, one not, and merged them. Although the fabrication chips away some of the film's status as a painful true story, it was a smart move dramatically to focus on one relationship. This confident, finely chiselled work is only Robbins's second as director,

after his mischievous political satire *Bob Roberts*. He has taken a giant stride forward. Renny Harlin, the action-movie maestro, takes a giant stride back with *Cutthroat Island*, an expensive and reckless movie that, inch for inch, probably contains more pirate clichés and gunpowder explosions than any other. It might make a slight dent on people too young to know what a good swashbuckler looks like, although even they may fret at the one-dimensional characters and the dull repetition of chases, swordfights, and debris descending in slow-motion.

The star attraction is Geena Davis, the director's wife, giving a supposed feminist twist to the genre as Morgan Adams, a feisty 17th-century lass who assumes control of her father's pirate ship in the Caribbean. Strapped into low-cut dresses, with long straggly hair and a cut across her left eyebrow, Davis literally thrusts herself forward as a tough-talking action heroine. But in doing so, her natural qualities and droll sense of comedy are quashed.

Her companion in misfortune is Matthew Modine, an educated thief who joins Morgan in hunting for buried treasure. Modine's nonchalance might suit modern dramas, but in a period extravaganza like this a puff of wind could blow him away. Unfortunately it does not.

At least Frank Langella relishes the villainous role of Morgan's uncle Dawg. Most of the time, cast and crew strain with effort. Making *Cutthroat Island* used up the resources of Malta, Thailand, Jim Henson's Creature Workshop, a model unit at Pinewood Studios, the London Symphony Orchestra, and \$70 million. The production company, Caroleo, is now fighting for survival. Was it worth it?

Television comedy aficionados rightly regard *The Phil Silvers Show*, produced by Nat Hiken for CBS in the 1950s, as

the eighth wonder of the world. Who would dare duplicate Silvers's creation of Ernest G. Bilko, the fast-talking Master Sergeant dedicated to fleecing every cent from his platoon? The answer, in *Sgt Bilko*, is Steve Martin, last seen updating *Silas Marner* in *A Simple Twist of Fate*. His career choices grow increasingly bizarre.

Where Silvers's motor pool was stocked with veteran character actors, Martin's bunch are fresh-faced youngsters, to match the intended audience. Character names are the same, although Bilko's henches have turned black and Barbells is female. Andy Breckman's script plunders some of Hikin's best lines, while Martin plucks the famous Bilko yell. The film, directed by Jonathan Lynn, may not be as dire as expectations and the trailer suggested; but no one who has seen the originals will clutch this broad, vulgar spin-off to their bosom.

From *Bilko* to *Balto*: a bland animated film from Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment. The story, based at some distance on truth, is set in Alaska during a diphtheria epidemic in 1925. This lands the artists with two big problems. How do you separate one tract of snow

from another? And how do you make entertainment from the illness of children?

Despite using special techniques, director Simon Wells and his team never make the Arctic landscape easy on the eye; it's like staring at a row of white handkerchiefs. As for the children, apart from one grotesque scene of coughing tonsils lined up in their beds, the focus rests on the animals, dogs chiefly, that carry antitoxins to town.

Balto, half-dog, half-wolf, is an outcast, mocked for his mixed heritage, but the emergency boosts his self-esteem. As he finally tells the town braggart, "Since when do you need a pedigree to help someone?" This is toe-curling stuff, indifferently voiced by Kevin Bacon, Bridge Fonda and others.

Family entertainment perks up slightly with *Dunston Checks In*, a breezy comedy about an orang-utan, two kids and Rupert Everett causing mayhem in a five-star hotel. Unlike *Babe* the pig, the orang-utan does not speak, but he blows raspberries nicely. Everett does a Terry-Thomas turn as the aristocratic poseur who uses the monkey to steal jewels: a tiresome sight, although he gets the film's best line when

he tells his charge, "I have two words to say to you: medical experiment."

The real star of the film is the hotel setting, and youngsters should have reasonable fun seeing luxurious trappings trashed. Adults can amuse themselves watching Jason Alexander (from *Seinfeld*), and ungallantly pondering Faye Dunaway's age. Ken Kwapis, a TV hand, directed.

If phrases such as "virtual reality" and "global interface" bring a sparkle to your eyes, then *Lawnmower Man 2: Beyond Cyberspace* may be just the ticket. Stick-in-the-muds who like movies to reflect concrete reality will have a harder time; although director Farhad Mann shoves enough action on the screen to stop people falling asleep.

Matt Frewer assumes the title role of the scientist's guinea pig who wants to control the world from cyberspace, while Patrick Bergin, the Einstein of virtual reality, tries to stop him. Nothing in the plot makes much sense; what matters is the video-game spectacle of human projectiles in simulated environments, hurling one second, exploding the next. The film is silly and dishevelled, but there are worse high-tech fantasies around.

Extremely provoking*



Every week young film fans discuss new releases...

DEAD MAN WALKING

Paul Maynard, 20: This is excellent; the best film I've seen since *Schindler's List*. Atmospheric, good cinematography, and Sarandon certainly deserved her Oscar.

James Danton, 18: The scenes with Sarandon and Penn are electrifying. The film is extremely provoking; it has changed my views on the death penalty.

Thomas Stevens, 18: Excellent. I thought I might be irritated by the moral tone, but it was fairly convincing.

Alexandra Williams, 22: Extremely good; you come out feeling emotionally battered. Tim Robbins directs really well, and allows you to make your own judgment.

LAWNMOWER MAN 2

Paul: Absolutely dire: this is plotless and ridiculous. The special effects are far from special.

James: This called itself "Beyond Cyberspace", but it was actually beyond help. Even the orang-utan of *Dunston* acted better than the cast of this.

Thomas: This was pretty awful. Clichés abounded, and it was corny and annoying like a cheap television feature.

Alexandra: It only took me a minute to realise that this was horrendous. The effects were nearly all right, but the subject matter just didn't appeal.

DUNSTON CHECKS IN

Paul: I wanted to hate this — I normally hate animal films — but I enjoyed it despite myself. A lot of fun.

James: This was very funny, but if it were any longer, it would have dragged.

Thomas: Probably more of a kids' movie. I thought I wouldn't like it but it was fun. Not too cheesy either — more a sweet.

Alexandra: This was nothing new: good family entertainment, a good cast, the usual characters.



Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn as the nun and the murderer in Tim Robbins's powerful attack on the death penalty, *Dead Man Walking*

Dead man talking

Why Tim Robbins spoke up for the inmates on death row



Tim Robbins: "There are no rich people on death row"

plied with great conviction that there was no great debate on whether the state should be killing innocents.

Sierra Prejean was at first welcomed in. The bereaved parents blessed her for her courage in changing sides. When she said she had not changed sides, merely seen their point of view, she was thrown out on her ear. It was a moment of truth for one of America's leading opponents of the death penalty. It was also an intensely dramatic moment — one that played a large part in bringing her story to the screen and, last Monday, to the Oscars.

"Her courage in knocking on that door really grabbed me," Tim Robbins, the writer and director of *Dead Man Walking*, said recently. "That was an extraordinary act. In adapting her book I was looking for the human angle, the story and the relationships. And just when you thought you knew where they were going, she does this incredibly brave thing."

The death penalty is not Hollywood's favourite subject. Despite Robbins's clout as an infatuatedly talented polymath (he wrote, directed and starred in the political satire *Bob Roberts* four years ago) no American studio wanted to touch something as bleak as the true story of the legal killing of a murderer. One studio chief did phone to ask if the prisoner's role couldn't be rewritten to make him innocent, but Robbins's agent re-

furthermore, he argues, capital punishment is racist and too expensive in its application. "Most people on death row are there for killing a white person but when nobodies get killed they don't push for the death penalty." He cites recent research suggesting that it costs twice as much to execute a man than to imprison him for life. For good measure, he congratulates Britain's Parliament on refusing to put the death penalty to a referendum. "You have leaders in your country," he declares. "They know what it costs a society, financially and morally, to cross the line and allow killing in its own name."

Eventually the money came from English backers — Polygram and Working Title — and Robbins made the film he and Sister Prejean wanted. It features a harrowing murder, parental anger of stunning vehemence, and a bitter, racist, profoundly unlikeable death-row inmate. Box office returns have outstripped forecasts, but many Americans who have seen the film have emerged so moved by its portrayals of murder victims' families that they are unsure on which side of the death penalty fence Robbins stands.

"It's a poor person's punishment," he says. "There are no rich people on death row. It's as simple as that. If you are convicted of murder and don't have a good enough lawyer, you will wind up on death row. We've seen in the past few years what kind of justice money can buy. I can't get behind a system that punishes the poor in a different way than it punishes the rich."

GILES WHITTELL

ACADEMY AWARD WINNER

BEST ACTOR

NICOLAS CAGE

"BRILLIANT...DON'T MISS IT"
"COMPELLING" "EXCEPTIONALLY MOVING"
"An award-winning masterpiece"

NICOLAS CAGE

ELISABETH SHUE



AT CINEMAS NATIONWIDE NOW

THIS WEEK'S SPECIALS

LONDON
Vaudeville Theatre
May 2
• JULIAN SLADE'S musical *Salad Days* is returning to the Vaudeville, where it ran for more than 2,000 performances in the mid-1980s in a new production directed by Ned Sherrin and featuring the comedy team of Kit and the Widow. This simple, charming story of young love and a missing piano features songs such as *We Said We Wouldn't Look Back, It's Easy to Sing and We're Looking for a Piano*. Club members are invited to attend a discussion with the Theatre Makers with Slade and Sherrin before seeing the eventful performance. Tickets are £23.50 (the normal price for the show alone is £25). Tel 0171-886 9987. Mon to Sat 10am-6pm

Lyric Theatre
April 11
• CLUB members can meet choreographer Dein Perry and members of his cast after the evening performance of the hit dance show *Tap Dogs*. Tickets £17.50 (normally £22.50). Tel 0171-886 9987. Mon to Sat 10am-6pm

Playhouse Theatre
April 21
• PLAYWRIGHT Michael Cooney invites Theatre Club members to a rehearsed reading and discussion of his latest comedy, *Cash on Delivery*. Tickets £5. Tel 0171-839 4401

Oldham Coliseum Theatre
April 19-May 11
• TICKETS half-price (normally £8 to £12) for all performances

HOW TO BOOK — AND JOIN

TO JOIN the Theatre Club either send a cheque for £12.50, made payable to The Theatre Club, together with your name, address and telephone number to The Theatre Club, P.O. Box 2164, Colchester CO2 8JL. Ring 01206 791727 with credit card details. Please allow 28 days for delivery of your membership pack. For general inquiries call 0171-387 4673

TO BOOK, please phone the listed number during normal office hours. The price printed on the ticket you receive will be the special price negotiated by the Theatre Club. There may be a transaction charge to cover postage.



CHOICE 1

John Hannah stars in Strindberg's tale of erotic passion, *Miss Julie*

VENUE: Tonight at the Young Vic



CHOICE 2

Final week in Plymouth for F. Murray Abraham in the new *Tolstoy*

VENUE: Tonight at the Theatre Royal

THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE 1

Stephen Sondheim loses his wit in his latest musical *Passion*, now arrived in the West End



THEATRE 2

Edward Albee's early play, *A Delicate Balance*, makes a welcome comeback in Nottingham

LONDON

MISS JULIE Peter Teale directs Susan Lynch and John Hannah in Strindberg's tale of erotic passion and doom. The much heralded Teale is to co-direct the National's *Wise Men*. Preview: Tues 19 Mar, The Cut, £17.25, £30. Preview: tonight and opens tomorrow, 7.30pm. Until Apr 20. (S)

MUSICAL POWERHOUSES Some of London's finest musicians compete for audience attention tonight. The London Symphony Orchestra continues its *Brucknerian* series with Danièle Gaub at the Royal Festival Hall, while the London Philharmonic and the London Symphony Chorus join forces with the London Philharmonic. Both at 7.30pm. (S)

BERLICAN Opening night for the cast of the Donmar's *Fourier*. Julian Sutcliffe's acclaimed and richly atmospheric drama follows on, women of the 1890s at work on *Bordertown*. Ian Brown's production for English Touring Opera's *Die Fledermaus*. English Touring Opera, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 8pm; mats Apr 4, and Sat, 8pm. (S)

ELSEWHERE

BRISTOL American jazz pianist Jamie Williams has earned herself some high praise from very high

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Kris Anderson

places, including Dave Gaddick's one of the greatest jazz pianists I have ever heard," she enthuses tonight. St George's, Bradford Hill (S) 01772 93388. From Thu-Sun, South Bank (0171 960 4242), Apr 3, Southampton, Concord Club (01703 673 089); Apr 4, Farnham, Matings (01252 226 234).

MANCHESTER One Hamlet checks Michael Fyfe's adaptation of *Twelfth Night* at the Donmar, while Oli Garrett as the heroine faces being an encroaching modern world.

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COVENTRY Opening night for Strindberg's *Miss Julie* at Miles and Marti. Martin Harvey directs Peter Sherry and Michael Gunz as the wily landlady and the simple girl, variably searching for the American dream in a Depression-era town.

PLYMOUTH Last week of performances here for Tolstoy, starring F. Murray Abraham and Gemma Jones. Jeremy Sams directs the much-tweaked *Passion* at the Royal Opera House, London. Preview: Sat, 1pm. Then Sun, 7pm. Week prior to Easter. (S)

THEATRE ROYAL Royal Parade (01752 267222). Tonight-Sat, 7.30pm; mats today and Sat, 2.30pm.

LONDON GALLERIES British Museum: Sir William Hamilton collection (0171 636 1555). Courtauld. Drawings by Thomas Gainsborough (071 873 5232). ... National Gallery: Master paintings (0171 834 5200). National Portrait Gallery: Faces of the 80s (0171 834 0056). Royal Academy: Gustav Klimt's *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer* (0171 834 5200). ... V&A: The Leighton Frescoes (0171 838 6500). Whitworth: Jeff Wall, illuminated transcripts (0171 822 7888).

THEATRE UPSTAIRS Royal Court, St Martin's Lane (0171 730 1745). Preview: Sat, 1pm. Then Sun, 7.30pm. Open: April 2.

THEATRE GUIDE Jeremy Kingston's assessment of what's showing in London. **How full** (S) **Some seats available** **Seats at all prices**

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7.45pm, Sat, 2.30pm. Opens Apr 1pm. (S)

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC Elegant Haydn's *Double Concerto* for Cello and Solo Piano. Michael Ball and Martina Reiter. Repeated tomorrow in Hanley, substituting Sibelius for Schenker. Free Trade Hall, Peter Street (0161 834 1121). Tonight, 7.30pm.

LONG RUNNERS □ **BLOOD BROTHERS** Phoenix (0171 867 1044). □ **COMMUNICATING DOORS** Savoy (0171 836 8888). □ **FUNNY MONEY** Playhouse (0171 839 4401). □ **FAREWELL, MY LOVING FRIEND** (0171 834 1317). □ **MILES SALON** Drury Lane (0171 494 3409). □ **OLIVER!** Palladium (0171 494 5020). □ **SEASIDE BEAUTY** Adelphi (0171 836 5265). □ **THE WIDOW** in *Music Hall* (0171 836 5270).

SKYLIGHT Outstanding playing by Michael Gambon and Lesley Williams in David Hare's dramatisation of society's concerns in the form of a prudish comedy about a woman's affair. Royal Exchange, Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171 839 1738). Mon-Sat, 8pm; Sat, 2.30pm.

THE VERGE John Gielgud plays the obsessed hotel manager, harassed by his daughter and the three men in her life. Revival of the 1921 play by Pulitzer Prize-winning Sven Gielgud, whose father, Sir Granville, was a famous character actor. Orange Tree, Clarence Street, Richmond (0181 840 3633). Preview: tonight and opens tomorrow, 7.45pm.

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THE THIEFESS OF SHON Hedi Maclomson directs Clare McHale's first play for six years. Agnes and her former mentor, Quiller Couch (Michael Ball) are back in Greenwich, Croxton Hall SE10 (0181 858 7755). Preview: tonight Sat.

THEATRE UPSTAIRS Royal Court, St Martin's Lane (0171 730 1745). Preview: Sat, 1pm. Then Sun, 7.30pm. Open: April 2.

TONIGHT Hugely impressive staging of the innumerable chink's approach to pinball wizard. Loads of electronic tricks disguise Improbable Sits at Shelsley Avenue, WC1 (0171 579 1800). Sat, 8pm. Wed and Sat, 8pm.

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SKYLIGHT Outstanding playing by Michael Gambon and Lesley Williams in David Hare's dramatisation of society's concerns in the form of a prudish comedy about a woman's affair. Royal Exchange, Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171 839 1738). Mon-Sat, 8pm; Sat, 2.30pm.

THE THIEFESS OF SHON Hedi Maclomson directs Clare McHale's first play for six years. Agnes and her former mentor, Quiller Couch (Michael Ball) are back in Greenwich, Croxton Hall SE10 (0181 858 7755). Preview: tonight Sat.

THEATRE GUIDE Jeremy Kingston's assessment of what's showing in London. **How full** (S) **Some seats available** **Seats at all prices**

7.45pm, Sat, 2.30pm. Opens Apr 1pm. (S)

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Court order to journalist to disclose source violated Convention

Goodwin v United Kingdom

(Case No 16/1994/63/544)

Before R. Ryssdal, President and Judges R. Bernhardt, Thor Vilhjálmsson, F. Mässcher, B. Walsh, C. Russo, A. Spielmann, J. De Meyer, N. Vallicos, E. Palm, F. Bögi, Sir John Freeland, A. B. Baker, D. Gotchey, B. Replik, F. Jambrek, P. Kürs and U. Löhnus
Registrar H. Petzold
Deputy Registrar P. J. Mahoney
Judgment March 27

A court order requiring the applicant, a journalist, to reveal his source of information and the fine imposed upon him for having refused to do so gave rise to a violation of his right to freedom of expression under article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights held by eleven votes to seven.

Article 10 of the Convention provides:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent states from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or printed enterprises."

"The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the protection of order or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary."

Mr William Goodwin, a British national, was a journalist and lived in London. In August 1989 he joined the staff of *The Engineer* as a trainee journalist. On November that year, he was telephoned by an informant, who gave him unsolicited information about a company Tetra Ltd, to the effect that

the company were in the process of raising a £5 million loan and had financial problems as a result of an expected loss of £21 million for 1989 on a turnover of £20.3 million.

On April 6 and 7, Mr Goodwin called Tetra to check the facts and seek their comments on the information he had been given concerning the financial problems of the company. He subsequently prepared a draft article on the subject for publication in *The Engineer*.

Being of the opinion that the information originated from a draft of its confidential corporate article, he informed Tetra on November 1, 1989, that he applied for and obtained from the High Court an ex parte interim injunction to restrain Morgan-Grampian (Publishers) Ltd, publishers of *The Engineer* from publishing Mr Goodwin's article.

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been established. Throughout the proceedings the applicant had refused to disclose his notes. On April 10, 1990 the High Court fined him £5,000 for contempt of court.

The application was lodged with the European Commission of Human Rights on September 27, 1990. It was declared admissible on September 7, 1993. Having attempted unsuccessfully to secure a friendly settlement, the Commission drew up a report on March 1, 1994 in which it established the facts and expressed the opinion that there had been a violation of article 10 of the Convention (eleven votes to six).

In its judgment, the European Court of Human Rights held as follows:

I Alleged violation of article 10
The applicant complained under article 10 and that the disclosure order required him to reveal the identity of his source and the fine imposed upon him for having refused to do so. It was undisputed that those measures constituted an interference with his right to freedom of expression.

A Was the interference "prescribed by law"?

The impugned disclosure order and fine were "prescribed by law". Not only did the measures have a basis in national law but the law governing the imposition of the order was moreover foreseeable for the purposes of the regulation in article 10.

On the latter point, the Court recognised that in the area under consideration it might be difficult to frame laws with absolute precision and that some flexibility might even be desirable to enable the national courts to develop the law in the light of their assessment of what measures were necessary in the interests of justice.

The national courts' discretion in ordering disclosure was subjected to important limitations. The House of Lords' interpretation of the relevant law in the applicant's case did not go beyond what could be reasonably foreseen in the circumstances. Nor was there any other indication that the law in question

afforded the applicant inadequate protection against arbitrariness.

B Did the interference pursue a legitimate aim?

The interference pursued the legitimate aim of protecting Tetra's "rights". It was not necessary to determine whether it was also directed towards the "prevention of . . . crime".

C Was the interference "necessary in a democratic society"?

D General principles

The Court recalled that freedom of expression constituted one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and that the safeguards to be afforded to the press were of particular importance, as a recent authority *Jersild v Denmark* (*The Times* October 1994, Series A No 294, p23, 31).

The Court set out a number of general principles. Protection of journalistic sources was, it noted, one of the basic conditions for press freedom as was reflected in the laws and the professional codes of conduct in a number of countries and was affirmed in several international instruments on journalistic freedoms.

It cited as examples the Resolution on Journalistic Freedoms and Human Rights, adopted at the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy (Prague, December 7-8, 1994) and the Resolution on the Confidentiality of Journalists' Sources by the European Parliament, January 18, 1994 (Official Journal of the European Communities No C 4/39).

Without such protection, sources could be deterred from assisting the press in informing the public on matters of public interest. As a result the vital public watchdog role of the press could be undermined and the ability of the press to provide accurate and reliable information could be adversely affected.

E Court's assessment in the particular circumstances

In the instant case, as appeared from Lord Bridge's speech in the House of Lords, Tetra was granted an order for source disclosure primarily on the ground of the threat of severe damage to their business, and consequently to the livelihood of their employees, which would arise from disclosure of the information in their corporate plan while their restructuring negotiations were still continuing.

That threat, "sitting beneath them like a time bomb", as Lord Donaldson had put it in the Court of Appeal, could only be defused, Lord Bridge had considered, if they could identify the source either as himself the thief of the stolen copy of the plan or as a means of identifying the thief and thus put the company in a position to institute proceedings for the recovery of the missing document.

The importance of protecting the source, Lord Bridge had concluded, was much diminished by the source's complicity, at the very least, in a gross breach of confidentiality which was not counterbalanced by any legitimate interest in publication of the information.

The justifications for the disclosure order in the present case had to be seen in the broader context of the ex parte interim injunction which had earlier been granted to the company.

Similarly, that interest had to weigh heavily in the balance in determining as had to be done under article 10.2, whether the restriction was proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued, in sum, limitations on the confidentiality of information could not be the most justifiable scrutiny by the Court.

The Court's task, in exercising its supervisory function, was not to take the place of the national authorities but rather to review under article 10 the decisions they had taken, pursuant to their power of appreciation.

In so doing, the Court had to look at the interference complained of in the light of the case as a whole and determine whether the reasons adduced by the national authorities to justify it were relevant and sufficient.

F The being so, as far as the disclosure order merely served to reinforce the injunction, the additional restriction on freedom of expression which it entailed was not supported by sufficient reasons for the purposes of article 10.2 of the Convention.

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dissemination of the confidential information otherwise than by the press, in obtaining compensation and in unmasking a disloyal employee or collaborator were, even if considered cumulatively, sufficient to outweigh the vital public interest in the protection of the applicant journalist's source.

The further purpose served by the disclosure order, when measured against the standards imposed by the Convention could not amount to an overriding requirement in the public interest.

In sum, there was not, in the Court's view, a reasonable relationship of proportionality between the legitimate aim pursued by the disclosure order and the means deployed to achieve that aim.

The order requiring the applicant to reveal his source and the fine imposed upon him for having refused to do so could not be regarded as having been "necessary in a democratic society" for the protection of Tetra's rights under English law, notwithstanding the margin of appreciation available to the national authorities.

Accordingly, the Court concluded, Judges Ryssdal, Bernhardt, Thor Vilhjálmsson, Mässcher, Walsh, Sir John Freeland and Bögi dissenting, that both the order requiring the applicant to reveal his source and the fine imposed upon him for having refused to do so gave rise to a violation of his right to freedom of expression under article 10.

II Application of article 50

A Non-pecuniary damage

The Court considered that the finding of a violation constituted adequate satisfaction for the non-pecuniary damage suffered by the applicant.

B Costs and expenses

The Court found that the sum accepted as reasonable by the UK Government in the light of the circumstances thus awarded the applicant £27,905.50 (VAT included) for legal costs and expenses, less the £15,900 already paid in legal aid by the Council of Europe, a respect of legal fees (unanimously).

Court of Appeal

Police not immune from negligence suit

Swinney and Another v Chief Constable of Northumbria Police

Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Ward
Judgment March 22

Although the police as a matter of general immunity from actions for negligence in respect of their activities in the investigation and suppression of crime that immunity could be displaced by other considerations of public policy for the protection of the public.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing the appeal of the defendant, the Chief Constable of Northumbria Police, against the decision of Mr Justice Laws on January 24, 1995, to allow the appeal of the plaintiffs. Miss Kathleen Swinney and James John Swinney, against the order of District Judge Lancaster on July 19, 1994, to make Newcastle upon Tyne District Registry striking out, pursuant to Order 18, rule 19 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, the plaintiffs' action for damages for personal injury and loss suffered by them as a result of the negligence of the defendant's officers on or about April 8, 1991, in failing to keep secure confidential information relating to a crime supplied to them by the first plaintiff.

The Court of Appeal allowed an amendment to the plaintiff's statement of claim to include an allegation of breach of the duty of confidentiality by the officers.

Mr Jeremy Compton, QC and Mr Tony Wynd, for the chief constable, Mr John Powell, QC and Mr Richard G. Craven for the plaintiffs.

LORD JUSTICE HIRST said that if the case on the facts as pleaded in the statement of claim, which the court had to assume were true, was found to be arguable, it had to be allowed to proceed unless the defendant established beyond peradventure

it was bound to fail. The claim alleged that the plaintiffs, wife and husband, were tenants of a public house in Northumberland. The first plaintiff received information that could have helped to identify the driver of a vehicle which hit and killed a police officer on March 22, 1991, in Heddon when he tried to stop it.

That information, given to one of the defendant's officers, was recorded in a document which included the plaintiff's name. A duty of care was owed in the storage and safe keeping of the information, given in confidence, since the defendant's officer knew of the violent character of the persons allegedly involved in the crime.

That seemed to show that it was at least arguable that a special relationship did exist rendering the plaintiffs distinguishable from the general public as being particularly at risk. *Alexandrov* was arguably distinguishable especially as there was no element of confidentiality in that case, which loomed so large in the present.

The defendant's second main submission was that, even if there was arguably a duty of care owed, the defendant had an unarguable defence because of the police's general immunity based on public policy.

His Lordship, after referring to *Hill* (at p69), *Osman v Ferguson* (1993) 4 All ER 344, 353-354 and *Eigzouti-Daf v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis* (1995) QB 335, 349-350, said that Lord Justice Laws' reasoning in *Hill* had introduced an important qualification. "Public policy" might not apply if the Crown Prosecution Service or police voluntarily assumed responsibility.

Mr Justice Laws, referring to the fact that the law had for a long time recognised the need to protect police informants so as not to discourage them coming forward by fear of risk, said that the present was a case in which public policy, like *Janus*, pointed in two directions, so that a balancing exercise

had to be carried out on all the circumstances of the case.

Mr Compton argued that the judge's approach was no conflict between the two arms of public policy identified by the judge. The *Hill* case and cases subsequent to it created a blanket immunity from liability on the police, and the only circumstance where they might be liable was in a case where they deliberately broke the confidence. That did not cover an inadvertent disclosure, as in the present case.

His Lordship could not accept those submissions. The *Hill* case was of the greatest importance, and there was nothing in his judgment to undermine the principle that could not be completely divorced from the circumstances highlighted in that case, and in the *Osman* and *Eigzouti-Daf* cases.

The police did not have a blanket immunity and other considerations of public policy, as found by the judge, had weight: the protection of informants and their encouragement to come forward without fear of risk of their identity becoming known to suspects or to the public.

Public policy had to be assessed in the round. In the present case were the applicable considerations advanced in *Hill*, and on the other hand the considerations relating to the protection of informants. Since it is to say, if all aspects of public policy were considered in the round, it was at least arguable the general immunity did not apply.

It was also arguable on the facts pleaded that the police did assume a responsibility to the plaintiff, at least to the first plaintiff, on confidentiality that brought into play the exception identified in the *Eigzouti-Daf* case.

Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Ward delivered concurring judgments.

Solicitors: Cruates, Newcastle upon Tyne; Hay & Kilner, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Mr Neil Fitzgibbons for the defendants.

SIR IAN GLIDGWELL agreed that as similar activities outside London were explicitly excluded from the definition of street trading by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, Parliament, by not specifically excluding the activity in the 1990 Act, should be presumed to have included its inclusion.

His Lordship said that the dichotomy in the definition of street trading under the 1990 Act was between the selling or exposing for sale on the footways outside their shop premises without a licence, contrast to section 38(1) of the 1990 Act.

Section 21 of the 1990 Act provides "[1] . . . street trading" means "the selling or exposing of or the offering for sale of any article . . . in the street for gain or reward".

Mr Clive Lewis for the council.

Street-trading shop

Wandsworth London Borough Council v Rosenthal and Another

Before Lord Justice Leggatt and Sir Ian Glidwell
Judgment March 25

The exposing of goods for sale on a pavement outside a shop for payment within the shop was street trading for the purposes of the London Local Authorities Act 1990.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held when allowing an appeal by way of case stated brought by the London Borough of Wandsworth against the dismissal by Mr Ian Baker, Wells Street Stipendiary Magistrate, on July 10, 1995 of charges against Anita Rosenthal and Rohit Shah of engaging in street trading on the footways outside their shop premises without a licence, contrast to section 38(1) of the

Tim Waterstone on the broad scope and high drama of a cultural chameleon's encounter with Dark Age Britain

One of the problems with reviewing a Melvyn Bragg novel is how to keep an open mind. We see him on our television screens engaging with writers as diverse as Martin Amis, Dame Barbara Cartland, Edward Albee and Tom Sharpe, so it is difficult not to build up expectations about the kind of fiction which might emerge from this cultural chameleon.

He is perhaps particularly vulnerable when his novels — most recently *A Time to Dance* and *Crystal Rooms* — have a contemporary theme. The voice is not experimental enough to save Bragg from that school of criticism which does no more than complain that he has neither the surreal comic qualities of, say, Thomas Pynchon nor the bizarre elegance of, say, Muriel Spark. Why should he be expected to?

In *Credo* he has returned to the form of the historical novel with which he had a notable success nine years ago in *The Maid of*

A romance of miracles and saints

CREDO
By Melvyn Bragg
Sceptre, £16.99

Buttermere. What emerges is a gripping saga of great passion, driven by prose of furious energy. *Credo* is set in the final decades of the 7th century, when the warrior code of the Dark Ages was in confused conflict with the civilising influences of the early Church. The narrative centres on the semi-mythical figure of Bega, a young Irish princess who has been brought with a fragment of the True Cross. She falls in love with the man who has given her knowledge — her tutor Padric, prince of the British kingdom of Raged. They are banished to Britain by her father after the

murder of a rapist nobleman who was to be her husband.

There follows a lifelong struggle between Bega's vocation as a bride of Christ, and her passion for Padric. Bega's journey of spiritual uncertainty is at the core of the book, as she is charged to "live for the faith" — despite her naturally wilful inclination to die for it.

Striving to distinguish God's will from her own, she is persuaded by Saint Cuthbert to renounce Padric and dedicate her life to God; she enters the Abbey of Whitby under the tutelage of Abbess Hilda, then founds a nunnery on the western coast.

Padric, still longing for marriage to Bega, finds his life absorbed in the struggle to free Raged from its Northumbrian overlords. Bragg draws for us a Britain locked in bloody conflict



Bragg: elemental sensibility

between the Celtic and Roman factions of the Church, a land shadowed by years of war, plague and famine. Bega and Padric work out their lives in agonising separation; finally, with Padric on his deathbed, they are movingly reunited.

The emotional pacing of the love story is well sustained against a large canvas of events and characters, some fictional, some drawn from historical accounts. Bragg seems wholly comfortable with the sweep of the period, in his own words an age "of saints, scholars, miracles, abbeys, gospels, crosses and the survival of the British".

The physical privations and brutish militarism of the time are robustly portrayed, and the social and religious framework feels authentic in its details. Bragg lists the breadth of his reading, and emphasises that his controlling text has been the Venerable Bede's *A History of The English Church And People*.

Of course, the dead hand of history can overwhelm fiction of this kind but what is impressive and moving in *Credo* is the texture

of the world that Bragg evokes. Known for his love of the Romans, it seems that he has found in the Dark Ages another period when landscape and inner life merged into one another. He succeeds in creating a world dominated by the elements, where the characters' spiritual anxieties find constant correspondence in the physical world around them.

Bega suffers "days like cliffs", her father's anger is a "storm of blood in his brain", and the image of battle seems to seep into every aspect of the characters' lives.

Perhaps as a consequence of this elemental sensibility, the writing is sometimes overloaded with sensations and occasionally knotted with epithets to the point of obscurity. This is a very long novel, and with the

prevailing fashion for pared-down prose, the headlong rush and occasional clumsiness of Bragg's writing will not be to everyone's taste. I was puzzled too by the omission of Caedmon, the first named English poet, who lived at Whitby under St Hilda; it is surely too good an opportunity to miss out the father of English poetry.

But these are minor quibbles against what is undoubtedly a sustained, impassioned and uplifting work of popular historical fiction. There is a far-reaching imagination at work here, and many of the sequences have a thrilling power, ranging from the battles and sea voyages to the more intimate scenes of love and visions. He should achieve a wide audience, reawakening interest in this most dramatic but these days little considered period in our nation's history.

Tim Waterstone's third novel, *A Passage of Lives*, will be published in August by Hodder Headline.

Creating language at a stroke

Jean Aitchison

GROOMING, GOSSIP AND THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE
By Robin Dunbar
Faber, £15.99

To be groomed by a monkey is to experience primordial emotions ... the gradual surrender to another's avid fingers sliding expertly across bare skin ... You begin to relax into the sheer intensity of the business. These words from the beginning of Robin Dunbar's book lead one to wonder how professors of psychology at the University of Liverpool spend their spare time.

But it soon becomes clear that this book is an attempt to pad out a smallish, interesting theory on the relationship between primate grooming and speech, into a whole popularising book on the topic are due out this year, and Dunbar's is one of the first.

His book centres on the grooming-gossip theory — that primate chit-chat is a replacement activity for the manual grooming of other primates. This idea is not new. The image of stroking with words occurs in Shakespeare, who makes Caliban in *The Merchant of Venice* complain: "When thou comest first, thou strok'st me, and mad'st much of me" and the notion of chitter-chatter as "grooming talk" was popularised over a quarter of a century ago by Desmond Morris in his book *The Naked Ape* (1967). But Dunbar attempts to account for the grooming-gossip link.

His theory is based crucially on group size. Human societies, he argues, "contain buried within them a natural grouping of around 150 people".

*A*s others have pointed out, and as Dunbar himself admits, it is "very easy to play the numerologist and find numbers to fit whatever size your theory requires". So he is not necessarily right in his numbers game. But he has made perhaps the first serious attempt to link the observation that language is a substitute for grooming with a possible explanation for why this came about. This then, is the core of the book, which is fleshed out with discussions and diagrams showing the relationship between brain size, group size and grooming time.

Yet a basic problem is that increased brain size in humans correlates not only with group size, but also with other variables, such as an improved diet, especially meat-eating, and also with an ability to deceive, known as



Language may have replaced manual grooming: *The Lesson in the Use of the Fan* (detail), Abraham Solomon (1824-62)

This, he suggests, is "the number of people you would not feel embarrassed about joining uninvited for a drink if you happened to bump into them in a bar". It's roughly the number of living descendants an ancestral couple might have produced in hunter-gatherer societies.

It's also the number typically found in the villages of the earliest farmers, and is claimed to be the ideal maximum size for a church congregation or a fighting unit. This is too many for mutual manual grooming. Talking as a replacement is not so time-consuming, and allows more than one person to be "groomed" at the same time.

Yet a basic problem is that increased brain size in humans correlates not only with group size, but also with other variables, such as an improved diet, especially meat-eating, and also with an ability to deceive, known as

the Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis. Successful deception requires a "theory of mind", an ability to imagine the viewpoint of others.

At one time the Machiavellian intelligence supporters were at loggerheads with the gossip-grooming proponents. But Dunbar has now accepted that the two ideas are complementary, not contradictory, since both involve an increase in sophisticated social manipulation.

Dunbar brings in further findings to back up his claims: we are naked apes, and lack

the hair which makes extensive manual grooming useful. He adopts the theory (not his own) that a move to less heavily forested woodlands exposed proto-humans to extensive heat from the sun. An animal which walks upright and is naked will keep cool better, with hair retained above all on the head, the surface mainly exposed to the sun at midday.

This book then provides a useful overview of some possible language triggers. But when it comes to language itself, the author is clearly

floundering, and is unaware of recent ideas — perhaps not surprising in someone who apart from his grooming-gossip work is best known for his study of the social strategies of gelada baboons. His comments on actual speech are sparse, and sometimes inaccurate, as with his brief excursion into the reconstruction of early languages.

In all, fewer than a dozen linguistics writers are mentioned, not all of them correctly spelt, and the bibliographical notes on animals which have been taught a language

system are attached to the wrong chapter.

Overall, the author has surrounded a kernel of interesting speculation with a wrapping of airy persiflage, some of it misleading. But he has shown that gossip about gossip is more than "mere windy talk".

Jean Aitchison is the Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford University; her book *The Seeds of Speech: Language, Origin and Evolution* will be published in April by Cambridge University Press

Here is a drowned man, "white and bloated as soggy bread". Here are rich, country-club girls, "their hard, smooth bodies like car fenders". Here is the realm of the perfect image, so simple and precise that it is almost possible to believe it always existed. These two collections of short stories provide landscapes wherein such images may be set like follies; is there any more to it than that?

All literary lineages are complex, and it is facile to attempt to trace a hard and fast ancestry. But Hemingway once claimed that "all modern American literature" is out of Huck Finn; it could be argued that the modern American story is descended directly from Hemingway, with Stephen Crane and Sherwood Anderson — among others — as cousins.

Hemingway tried to "... put down what really happened in action: what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced..." And so Ernest Hemingway begat Raymond Carver, whose tales, hinging on a moment of perception that cuts through the world's noise, have influenced many of the present generation of American story-writers.

No ten dollar words

Erica Wagner

THE POINT
By Charles D'Ambriso
Flamingo, £9.99
A STRANGER IN THIS WORLD
By Kevin Canty
Viking, £13.50

His shadow is clearly visible on the stories of both D'Ambriso and Canty — particularly in those of the former. In *Lyricism* Potter tackles Joan for not much reason and pulls her down in the grass; in *American Bullfrog*, Freddie and Reginald collude "this, in its own way, was a kind of discussion we were having, a debate". D'Ambriso's stories — set in a Pacific Northwest where Boeing have laid off 60,000 workers — do not seek to explain confusion but reflect it.

But this makes misjudgment treacherous: the final image of *The Point* has a writing-school neatness that a more delicate, less abrasive tale, such as *Jacinta*, avoids.

But it is Canty who most effectively deploys Hemingway's tactic, particularly in *Pretty Judy*, about a boy's half-unwilling and yet inexorable liaison with a mentally handicapped girl. This tale makes the reader's emotions of fascination and disgust a mirror of the boy's compulsion. *Dogs* risks the awkward second-person, but its compression allows it to escape contrivance, and makes immediate the beautiful bodies of dogs killed for no reason other than "moving to new apt".

In Canty's final, title story, Candy Collins, feeling disjoined from life by her husband's death, "liked herself best when she was almost nothing". In a certain sense all the characters in these collections are strangers in the world, retreating from its random mysteries into the tiny, almost meaningless acts over which they have some control.

Surviving letters show that Stalin remained on kindly but distant terms with his mother in Georgia. He was indifferent to everyone else. Medical records reveal that Nadezhda, his second wife, committed suicide just before she was due for a cancer operation; perhaps she did not kill herself solely to be rid of him, as usually maintained.

EDWARD RADZINSKY is a journalist and playwright, and his biography of Stalin has more dramatic flourish than scholarly analysis. Perhaps only specialists need now be concerned with the details of the career. Stalinist terror, however, does not yet convert into history. Responsible for it, was Stalin mad or bad?

Naturally he took care to leave few psychological clues, and certainly no confessional equivalent of *Mein Kampf*. Radzinsky makes much of the access he has had to the presidential and other archives which had been closed, but little more than juicy titbits are to be garnered from them. As usual with Stalin, intelligent guess work must still catch the various dreads in the inner circle.

Quick to grasp the essentials of any argument, Stalin also had an outstanding memory. None of his colleagues and rivals trusted him, but they distrusted each other more. Exploiting every opening, Stalin was intimidating. Radzinsky sees him as energised simultaneously by hot rage and cold calculation, a

master plotter sitting through the night in the Kremlin and marking death lists, bad enough to seem mad but sane by totalitarian standards. Lust for power is the key.

Stalin is held to have panicked at the German invasion in 1941, and to have hidden himself away for days on end. Radzinsky has found the calendar of his engagements and the diary of an administrative assistant which establish that

Stalin was in his office for all but 48 hours of the initial period, with Politburo members and his generals. Rage was again the uppermost emotion, rage with his own mistaken assumption that Hitler would act logically.

Rage and calculation turned into outright paranoia after the war. Eastern and Central Europe were now his, he had the nuclear weapon, and he prepared for the apocalyptic triumph of communism. A month before he died, he was heard to declare: "If the imperialist gentlemen feel like going to war, there is no more suitable moment for us than this." Radzinsky interprets it literally.

Finally Radzinsky traced someone by the name of Peter Logachev, who had been on duty in the dacha at the moment of Stalin's death. From this man's story it seems that Stalin's would-be successors deliberately denied him medical help, and possibly even made sure that he would die.

Not

so many were killed in the terror after all — plenty survived, and the more deplorable excesses were over by 1939 (those murdered in killing cycles between 1940 and 1953 for some reason need not be taken into account).

Revisionism of this sort, as

of Nazism, proves only lack of

imagination about life in a

setting without any of the

usual moral assumptions.

Some unhappy Russians are

so terrified of the future that

they are willing to be duped

about the past. But an Ameri-

can professor has no such

excuse.

After all, he loved his mother

David Pryce-Jones

STALIN
By Edward Radzinsky
Hodder & Stoughton, £25
LIFE AND TERROR IN STALIN'S RUSSIA
By Robert W. Thurston
Yale, £18.50



Stalin: left no confession

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The complexities of complicity

Gitta Sereny on the shared guilt for a nation's old wrongs

Of all the events in modern history, probably none has been more exhaustively written about than the Nazis' murder of the Jews. And here now, 51 years on, is another *cri de cœur*.

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen is a young assistant professor of government and social studies at Harvard (where his father, Erich, who survived the Nazi camps, is a visiting lecturer in Jewish studies). *Hitler's Willing Executioners* retains many of the characteristics of the 1991 doctoral dissertation from which it originates. But he is clever and a talented researcher even if, in parts of this passionately angry book, the talent is ill-used.

He sets out to prove that what he calls "eliminationist" anti-Semitism dominated German public thinking from at least 1845. The general view in Germany for more than a century, he

HITLER'S WILLING EXECUTIONERS
By Daniel Jonah Goldhagen
Little, Brown, £20

writes, was of Jews as "corrosive" "malevolent" and "incompatible with Germans". This led to the conviction that they had to be "eliminated" — in those early years preferably by conversion to Christianity.

Quotations from newspapers or public personalities of the time are carefully selected to support this thesis. There is no attempt to present comparative views. He omits the fact, for example, that the emancipation movement in Germany during the 19th century was sufficiently strong and successful that great numbers of Jews chose Germany as their refuge from the pogroms in Eastern Europe and were welcomed there.

By skimming over the liberalism of the Weimar Republic (where, incidentally, a Jew, Jakob Riesser, was Vice-President of the Reichstag), he arrives at the conclusion that as the majority of Germany's Jews rejected the "benign" solution of baptism, this "eliminationist" anti-Semitism, deeply ingrained in the German personality, inevitably led to extermination.

Part II of the book deals with the German perpetrators: in occupied Eastern Europe, in the concentration and labour camps, and on the death marches" at the end of the war.

Only the last part here is new, his descriptions starkly telling. Much of the rest of the material was derived from the same source as Christopher Browning's instant classic *Ordinary Men* (1992) with which he followed up a shocking collection of letters and statements in *Those Were The Days and God With Us* by the German writers Klee, Dressen and Riess.

And they lived unhappily ever after

Antonia Fraser

THE STUART PRINCESSES
By Alison Plowden
Alan Sutton, £17.99

In order to make up for the disappointment of not being queen, "she wished to reign in the hearts of all good people by the charm of her person and the real beauty of her soul". The sentiments, which have an oddly contemporary ring, were in fact those of a 17th-century princess, Henrietta Anne, sister of Charles II, better known under her pet name Minette.

The disappointment which Minette suffered was to be slighted by her first cousin, Louis XIV, as being too young, too thin and too unimportant. In consequence she was married off to his brother, "Monsieur" Philippe Duc d'Orléans, and as "Madame", the first lady of the French court after the Queen, did indeed reign in a number of French hearts.

Nevertheless, Minette's first love and loyalty was to her brother, King Charles across the water. Minette retained a touching sense of her own destiny as an English princess. It was faithful and discreet Minette whom King Louis and King Charles used as the conduit for their clandestine negotiations which resulted in the Secret Treaty of Dover of 1670. Her premature death shortly afterwards robbed



Charles, James and Mary, three of Charles I's children

gown had to be slit up the side with a pair of shears in order to satisfy the observers, English and Dutch.

The princesses in question range from Elizabeth, daughter of James I, born in 1596, to Anne, daughter of James II, who reigned from 1702 to 1714. Mary, the eldest daughter of Charles I, was married off to William of Orange when she was nine and he 15. After the marriage, the young pair were officially "bedded", which meant that, since Mary was too young for real consummation to take place, their bare legs had to be seen to touch. At one point the Princess's night-

was just 19. Typically, Mary wanted the boy to be named Charles, but the Dowager Princess of Orange insisted that it was an unlucky name, and so William it was.

In the course of time this young William of Orange was married to his first cousin, another Stuart princess named Mary, daughter of the future James II. Mary wept bitter tears when she was condemned — as she saw it — to leave her beloved country and friends for Holland. In vain Charles II's kindly wife, Catherine of Braganza, tried to console her, pointing out that when she made her own

bridal journey from Portugal she had never even seen her future bridegroom. "But madam," replied Mary unanswerably, "you came into England; but I am going out of England." Little did Mary know that time's revolutions would bring Mary to occupy, jointly with William, her father's English throne.

In general, Plowden deploys

her extensive knowledge of Tudor and Stuart times to provide a series of skilfully written studies for those who like to read historical stories featuring real princesses rather than fairy tales. But it has to be said that most of the stories are sad ones. Saddest of all is perhaps the fate of Elizabeth, daughter of Charles I, who died in captivity at Carisbrooke Castle, at the age of 15.

Yet few of the arranged royal marriages proved happy. However, one did turn into a love match: that was the union of James I's daughter Elizabeth and Frederick, the Elector Palatine. The Elizabeth also bore an enormous family, most of whom survived. It is perhaps a good augury to reflect that the present Queen descends from this robust Elizabeth, rather than her more fragile cousins.



"Germans! Defend yourselves! Don't shop with Jews!" Photographing those who break a boycott of Jewish stores in Berlin, 1938: the pictures would later be publicly displayed

nations, these are precisely the two who protected their Jews.

In an imaginative paragraph — one can only say a fantasy — he paints a picture of German killers walking through the woods next to children on the way to the killing ground. With what emotions, he asks, did these men gaze, say, at an eight or twelve-year-old girl ... a delicate little human being? As one reads this, one feels this is written by a man in an ivory tower who knows and understands nothing.

"There were so many children: did they ever make you think of your children, of how you would feel in the position of their parents?" I asked Franz Stangl, Commandant of Treblinka. He looked astonished at my question. "No," he said after some thought. "I can't say I ever thought that way. You see ... how can I explain ... I rarely saw them as individuals ... they were naked ... running ... driven with whips ..."

The method of depersonalising nudity, and running *en masse*, planned by monster psychologists in Berlin, worked only too well. Far from noticing any delicate little girls, the Jews, once undressed, ceased to be human beings for these German killers, who, in their mass orgies, ceased being individuals.

Mr Goldhagen is too intent on proving his preconceived and far too simplistic explanation for the murder

of the Jews: that they were killed, not because of Hitler's manic ideology and his extraordinary ability to convince his people that bad was good; and not because the Germans were slaves to authority and, with few exceptions, devoid of civic courage. The Jews died, he says, over and over as if repetition could make it so, because the majority of 60 million Germans wanted them dead, knew about the murders and took whatever part they could in them.

Countless historians and thinkers have shown over the past 50 years that, whatever the degree of anti-Semitism in Germany, such a totalistic notion is nonsense. But Goldhagen scorns all of them. Youthfully dispensing criticism and advice as to how they could and should do better, he disregards the fundamentals of social and political analysis. "Stop referring to them as Nazis," he cries, and one senses his agony. "They were Germans, Germans, Germans. Can one write a book such as this in this degree of pain?

Worst of all, his thesis shows that he has not yet understood the truth history has proved: that murderous bigotry is not ingrained in the character of any one nation but is part of the human condition. It is not only young Germans who, as did happen after 1945, needed to be retaught humanity, but all our children, white, black, brown and yellow, need to learn this now and for evermore.

Fission reaction

Jasper Rees

PAGAN AND HER PARENTS
By Michael Arditti
Sinclair-Stevenson, £12.99



Leo's father is ga-ga: Candida's bitter brother is in a wheelchair; Candida herself, after a lifetime of hectic sex, is claimed by motor neurone disease. And, as if our cup runneth not over, Pagan's father turns out to be a transsexual.

It turns out that Candida always resented her adoption, and spent her life maddeningly subverting their petty bourgeois values (very occasionally she would do it fully clothed). But Leo is benign, sociable, conciliatory, a well-liked television chat show host to boot, and probably too good to be true. Whatever, in his decency he can't see the harm in their request.

The saga that ensues comes with a health warning for all parents and guardians prone to panic attacks and night sweats. Pagan is separated from her one true, if not biological, parent by a Kafkaesque minefield of dread affidavits and furive intolerance, as the frostiness between the rival carers turns into cold war, then goes nuclear as ritual allegations of child abuse are traded. And although Leo casts the grandparents' suburban-Christian morality as a species of Gothic villainy, it's the homosexual to whom the mud sticks.

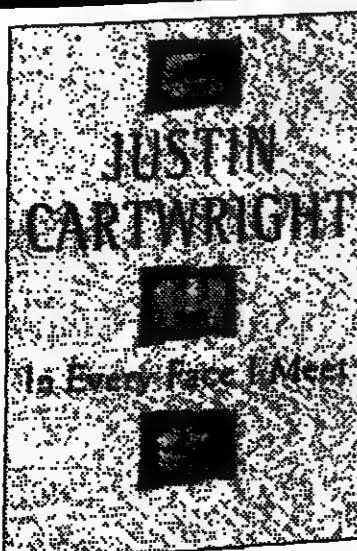
This is a manifesto for minorities, and true to the genre it sometimes makes exaggerated claims. Eager to prove that we can't all be able-bodied heteros, Arditti packs Pagan's world with characters subjected to discrimination because of what they do — or can't do — with their bodies.

Let's ration ourselves to one topographical nitpick, advising the author never to show his face in West Acton, where he has chosen to relocate Wormwood Scrubs.

East Acton, meanwhile, can breathe a sigh of relief, and so can everyone by the end of the novel, whose shining virtue is its undemonstrative moral cleanliness. It should be required reading wherever the nuclear family is small-mindedly lauded as the true ideal: a case of the unputdownable in pursuit of the unshakeable.



Dore's Adam and Eve



Justin Cartwright
IN EVERY FACE I MEET

'A brilliant and original book'

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

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There
is
light
Enoch Powell

THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES
Translated by Everett Fox
Harvill, £25

Ponderous, two inches thick, with heavily gilded edge, bottom and top, comes a daunting volume from the Director of the Jewish Studies Programme at Clark University at Worcester, Illinois; but those who open it must refuse to be daunted and allow themselves to be drawn on to read the old familiar works in a new dress.

In 1923 the German theologian, Martin Buber, with his collaborator, Franz Rosenzweig, set out to present the first books of the Hebrew Bible with due attention to their linguistic character — as remote from that of our modern languages as poetry is from prose.

They could not therefore offer a comfortable read; but they believed they conveyed something important about the thought and expression of the authors who created the Torah. Everett Fox believed the same could be attempted in English, and he has done this in a new translation with introduction, commentary and notes.

The problem with the experiment is that radical English character which makes the Tyndale version that lies beneath the King James Bible a model of the tuning of the English tongue. It would be hard to find a language more remote from biblical Hebrew than English. The Hebrew Bible represents the resonance of Hebrew and Hebrew mode of expression, and to present a text in a form which reveals those characteristics causes difficulty in a work intended to be read aloud.

Unlike most new translations of the Bible, this one disdains to attempt to reflect contemporary usage of the English language. In particular, the traditional layout of the text in solid paragraphs is replaced in favour of displaying the natural pauses and breaks of recitation. The result is surprisingly enlightening, fascinating and satisfactory.

In the account of the creation, the Authorised Version runs: "And God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly, the moving creature that has life and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."

"God said

Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living beings and let fowl fly above the earth across the dome of the heavens."

The translator believes that words have "lost their elemental meaning and in a way that the optimistic 19th century in which Buber and Rosenzweig worked could not have dared to believe. In this situation can a translation of ancient books, even though they are from the Bible, have anything to say or are they merely a 'voice from a dead man'? I use Kafka's mordant expression."

The reader who can afford this luxurious volume will find himself caught by the simplicities of it and will believe that, even in translation, there is a route through language to a comprehension of a different world.

مكتبة الأهل

Britain's travellers are upwardly mobile

THE WAY Britain takes a holiday is undergoing a transformation of its periodic upheavals. The first signs appeared a few months ago when the number of customers booking a foreign package holiday fell sharply. Many in the industry assumed this would be temporary, something that could be cured cutting the number of holidays offered. I refused to believe that the two-week family package had had its day. But it is now clear that the wealthy, independent and more demanding are once again setting a trend

that will inevitably trickle down the social pyramid.

In the short-term, the number of people taking foreign package holidays will continue to fall, particularly at the bottom end of the market.

Those who do travel abroad, however, will demand ever higher standards, rather than lower prices. They will refuse to be cajoled into early booking but will follow the continental pattern of deciding at the last moment where to go. They will travel further and stay for shorter periods while spend-

ing just as much as, if not more than, they did before.

Figures compiled by the British travel trade show that bookings for European package holidays are 20 per cent lower than they were this time last year. And, the experts say, by the end of the summer only eight million people will have taken a package holiday this year, down two million from 1995.



The Travel Business
HARVEY ELLIOTT

However, while the Mediterranean has slumped, there has been a rise in expensive long-haul

holidays, in the use of business class and in expensive villas, castles and hotels. The statistics were brought to life for me last weekend.

During the outward journey to St Malo and the return from Caen, the Brittany Ferries ship was comfortably

half full with couples who preferred to eat in the ship's best, and expensive, restaurant. Most were staying for two nights in châteaux rather than in cheap hotels or on campsites. On the car decks, Range Rovers were more in evidence than Ford Fiestas.

On the way back the head of a small tour operator said: "The only people travelling now are the rich. They are unaffected by the franc fort or the high prices in France. They are now able to relax in towns and resorts that are no longer dominated by pack-

aged masses crammed into cheap gift shops."

This is why Majorca is blowing up its ugly concrete hotels, why Thomson is selling "city breaks" again, why those operators that aim to sell to the richest 4 per cent of the travelling public have never had it so good and why the French believe that their tourist fortunes are about to change.

Those who thought that cutting prices – and so often quality – would bring customers back are about to be proved spectacularly wrong.

BARGAINS OF THE WEEK

HOLIDAYS

From £329 a person, with flights from Garwick on Easter Sunday. Details: 0171-707 9000.

□ POST-EASTER savings in Kenya are available from Tropical Places with a four-night at an all-inclusive beach club in a marine national park for £699 with flights from Garwick on April 21 and 28. Details: 0142 825123.

□ SAVINGS of more than £100 a person are available from Kuoni for holidays in Grenada with prices starting at £449 for a week, with flights from Garwick on April 17 and 24. Details: 01306 742222.

□ SAVINGS of £200 a week on a luxury villa in Provence and £50 discounts on mid-July holidays are among the offers from Drive France. Details: 0181-395 8888.

HOTELS

per person including a gala dinner, health and fitness facilities and a children's Easter egg hunt. Details: 01293 614040.

□ THE Munich Park Hilton in Germany is celebrating the birth of King Ludwig II with a two-night weekend package including visits to his castles and Oberammergau. Prices from £76.65 per person. Details: 0345 581595.

□ VISITORS to the Chelsea Hotel in London's Knightsbridge at Easter can win a weekend for two to New York by buying a charity Easter egg (price £5). Room rates from £160 per night. Details: 0171-235 4377.

□ A TWO-NIGHT Easter package at the Forte Village in Sardinia costs from £219.

Channel Islands and the airline will provide a free economy-class ticket. Details: 01302 360777.

□ BRITISH Midland has launched Spring Saver fares on flights between East Midlands Airport and Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam or Edinburgh. All destinations cost £85 return, except £99 to Amsterdam. Details: 0345 554554.

□ BRITISH Airways has introduced seat sale fares between UK provincial airports and Germany: Aberdeen or Belfast to Dusseldorf costs £159, Edinburgh-Frankfurt £179 and Glasgow-Munich £217. Details: 0345 222111.

□ LUPUS Travel is charging £439 for return Alitalia flights between London and Johannesburg via Rome. Details: 0171-306 3000.

□ BOOK a Jersey European business-class ticket before March 31 on selected domestic routes to Belfast or the



A NEW monthly column supplied the worldwide security and detection agency.

HIGH RISK

ONLY essential travel is recommended in Guatemala. In the capital, Guatemala City, there are some four kidnappings and ten car thefts a day, despite a heavy troop presence. The situation may improve in future, however, as a temporary ceasefire has been announced by the country's three major guerrilla groups.

Colombia is also considered a high-risk area, with the National Liberation Army (ELN) holding hostage a Briton, a Dane and a German, all reportedly alive and well. The rural-based ELN periodically kidnaps foreign employees of large corporations and demands sizeable ransoms. Parcel bombs have been sent to two foreign missions recently. Internal travel by air is advised. Visitors travelling by road should take advice from the Embassy and local authorities beforehand.

In Iran, tension has been increased by accusations from the US and elsewhere that Iran is supporting the suicide bombers in Israel. In Gaza, Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement, is believed to have been responsible for three of the recent bombings. Travellers to Israel would be well advised to wait until after the elections on May 29, and to avoid public transport.

The risk to travellers in the Indian-ruled area of Kashmir is high, with increasing conflict between police and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), while two recent bombs in Lahore underline the dangers of travelling in Pakistan.

In Nigeria ethnic fighting continues and disease, especially meningitis, is a serious risk. The World Health Organisation also notes deadly contagious diseases in the Sahel region of Zaire. Travel in Rwanda is not recommended either, with Hutu rebels involved in recent shootings.

Mozambique is considered high risk following a riot by unemployed former soldiers there on March 19.

EXTREME RISK

MILITANT groups pose a constant threat in Algeria, where non-essential travel is not advised. The GIA (Armed Islamic Group) recently exploded a vehicle bomb in Béjaia, and there has been shooting in the Hassi Massoud oil region and in Algiers.

Also dangerous is Sri Lanka, with a continuing threat from the Tamil Tigers. 300 of whom ambushed an army unit last weekend. Somalia has seen an increased number of kidnappings – and in the absence of proper government or police, more are likely.

• Pinkerton: 01420 541024

Football fever hits tour firms

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT

FOOTBALL fans planning to stay at home to watch Euro 96 – the European championship to be played at grounds across England in June – were last night blamed by tour operators for triggering a new holiday price war.

Those with no interest in soccer, however, could benefit by taking advantage of half-price packages available throughout the tournament. Tens of thousands of early summer holidays, which tour operators had hoped to sell at the full brochure price, will now be on sale at discounts of up to 50 per cent.

The first tour operator to move was Cosmos, the fourth biggest, which still has 30,000 unsold holidays in June.

"We were not prepared to be left with unsold holidays at the last moment," said Roger Corkhill, managing director. "When we looked at our position in June we decided to make the discounts available."

Noel Josephides, of Sunvil Holidays, said: "There is no doubt that the forthcoming European championship has affected the lower end of the market and that creeps up through the entire spectrum. Although June is especially bad, the normal booking rhythm is just not there at all this year. The Mediterranean is between 23 and 24 per cent down on this time last year although many long-haul destinations are still selling well."

Cosmos has cut the price of holidays in hotels featured in its Summer Sun. Greece, Turkey and Florida brochures and has also discounted packages to more exotic destinations such as Mexico, China and the Caribbean.

A holiday for a family of four in the Salou Pacific Apartments on the Costa Dorada from June 18 – the day England play Holland at Wembley – will now cost £456 for 14 nights compared with the brochure price of £997. Other reductions are available at nearly 140 hotels and apartments in 27 destinations.

Peter Rothwell, managing director of Airtours, said: "June is a real problem but it would be disappointing to see a really big tour operator such as us not holding our nerves. There is almost certainly going to be discounting among smaller companies."

Tour operators generally have reduced the number of holidays on sale throughout the summer by about 15 per cent in the hope that the remaining eight million can be sold at or near full price.

The question now is whether it is going to be enough," said Mr Corkhill. "Demand remains stagnant and there is no indication that things will get any better."

For the whole of the summer about five million holidays have been sold leaving some three million on agents' shelves. August has sold well and tour operators are confident that they will be able to sell all those available during the school holiday peak. But the doubts remain.

France slips in caravan league

BY STEVE KEENAN

BRITAIN's caravan holiday-makers are avoiding France to take the high road to other European destinations this summer. Camping operators are slashing prices as sales to France continue to trail 30 per cent below the same period last year.

In 1995, traditional enclaves such as Brittany, the Dordogne and the Vendée dominated the list of top holiday spots for 40,000 families who booked their holiday abroad with The Caravan Club.

In total, 18 of the 20 most popular destinations were in France, with French caravan sites filling the top seven places. But bookings so far to 1996 show only one French site in the top five, Royan in Charente-Maritime, which had been on the No. 1 slot from last year.

A site in Holland has leapt into 11th place, while other new favourites include Spain, Ireland, Germany and Italy.

The slump in demand for France reflects a fall of 30 per cent in all holidays to the

country this year. And people are travelling for shorter breaks, said Arlene Spicer, product manager for the Caravan Club's travel service.

The annual two-to-three week holiday has become less popular. Members are taking shorter breaks, perhaps two or three times a year, to destinations other than France.

Two caravan sites in Ireland and two in Spain feature in the 1996 top ten, with two in Italy and one in Germany also making the top 20.

Top ten caravan sites so far for 1996:

1. Royan, Charente-Maritime, France
2. Rijnsburg, Holland
3. Co Kerry, Ireland
4. Costa Brava, Spain
5. Noya, northern Spain
6. Le Pas Opton, Vendée, France
7. Co Wicklow, Ireland
8. Camping du Bohat, Brittany, France
9. Les Sables d'Olonne, Vendée, France
10. Atlantic Coast, France

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Aung San Suu Kyi: champion of the democracy movement and Nobel Peace Prize winner

Visitors urged to boycott Burma

TOURISTS were yesterday urged to boycott Burma in protest at the ruling military junta's abuse of human rights. Harvey Elliott writes.

Labour's shadow foreign minister Derek Fatchett described the Burmese State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which had designated 1996 as Visit Burma Year as "evil".

"The regime is clearly one of the worst in the world. The development of the tourist industry has been at a price to the local community which every decent person would regard as unacceptable. I would strongly urge tourists to think carefully before booking a holiday in Burma."

The Burmese Action Group, which is pressing for the restoration of human rights in the country, launched an "Alternative Guide" to the region in which they claim that the main tourism developments are being carried out by up to two million "slave labourers", including children.

Thousands of ordinary people are being forcibly removed from their homes to clean up tourist sites or to make way for new developments, it claims.

Yvette Mahon, co-ordinator of the group said: "By visiting Burma now people are lending legitimacy to a cruel and greedy military dictatorship."

The 38 British tour operators who organise visits to Burma were also urged to drop it from their brochures, or at least to explain to potential customers what was happening in the country at another meeting held yesterday by Tourism Concern.

But most are convinced they should not become involved. "We do not get involved in politics," said Alan Flook, secretary general of the Federation of Tour Operators.

"Members of the public must make up their own minds where they want to go."

About 2,000 Britons visited Burma last year out of a total of 95,600 foreign tourists.

Kenya spreads its attractions

BY TONY DAWNE

A NEW plan to encourage tourist development to spread throughout Kenya beyond the most popular national parks and short strips of coastline was announced yesterday.

David Western, director of Kenya Wildlife Service, told a meeting in London that "spreading the load" is vital if the country's landscape and animal life are to survive the continuing growth in tourism.

Travel companies are to be encouraged to be more imaginative in the choice of tours they offer while the service is negotiating with private landowners in lesser-known areas to persuade them to provide new lodges and tented camps for visitors.

Around 680,000 tourists went to Kenya last year, with four out of five going to see the big "five" animals (elephants, lions, leopards, buffalo and rhinoceros).

The service acts as the custodian of all wildlife in the country, as well as managing the parks and reserves, and ploughs all the money raised from tourism back into conservation. Through a newly created tourism department, it also meets landowners and helps them to find the funds and form legal associations to build tented camps and eco-tourist lodges.

THE TIMES TRAVEL OFFER

MONET'S GARDEN AND NORMANDY

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First real test as new season starts to swing

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN PONTE VEDRA BEACH

THE American professional golf season got underway early in January in California and the European tour swung into action in Singapore a few weeks later. However, starting here in Florida this morning, on a course ripped out of marshland and swamps and ruffed by winds off the Atlantic, is the first event of the year that truly unites the leading competitors from both tours. It is The Players' Championship and it is acceptable to describe it as the game's fifth most important tournament.

A sign greets you within moments

of stepping off the aircraft at Jacksonville airport. It reads: "The Players' Championship, The Great Field in Golf". It is not far wide of the mark.

Even after the withdrawal of Bernhard Langer, with a shoulder injury, the absence of José María Olazábal — about whom a decision will be made today as to whether he plays next week in Atlanta and in the US Masters the week after — and the absence of a couple of other leading players, the field comprises more than 40 of the world's leading 50 competitors, including six of the Europe and 11 of the US Ryder Cup teams. They are competing for a first prize of £420,000 and a purse of £2.3m, the largest on the US tour.

Costantino Rocca and Sam Torrance are two of Europe's debutants challenging for the title won by Lee Janzen in 1995, and Torrance won himself some more friends when he told a reporter in a local newspaper: "This [event] is huge in Europe. When you get 46 of the top 50 in the Sony rankings in one place, it's a very impressive field. I've never been invited, so I was very thrilled when they asked me to play here this year."

If you had been on the practice ground, or the driving range, as they call it out here, on Monday, you would have seen a broad-shouldered, bearded man whaling away with a series of different drivers and sending the ball enormous dis-

tances. Meet Sandy Lyle. His hirsute state was a result of chickenpox, which he contracted recently from one of his children, and, to combat this debilitating illness, he has been undergoing vitamin injections.

Lyle is competing in his eleventh Players' Championship and, as he has only twice before completed the full four rounds — and on one of those two occasions he won the title — it can be said that he wins every other time that he beats the halfway guillotine. "I was absolutely zapped," Lyle said, referring to the chickenpox "but I'm getting better all the time."

It would be hard for Colin Montgomerie to get much better at

the moment. After a three-month layoff, he won in Dubai recently with a total of 18 under par. Then he took a week off before arriving here on Sunday.

It being his first visit to the United States this year, the new, slimline Montgomerie received some searching questions about his recent weight loss. He admitted that he now weighed 210lb (15st) but then became coy when asked what he had been doing. "More," he admitted finally.

Montgomerie is awash with confidence as he begins a run of four successive events in the United States, which includes the tournament on Hilton Head Island in the week after the Masters. "I am as

confident as I have ever been," he said. "I am very happy with what is going on. There is nothing wrong with my game at all. It is as good as it ever was, if not better."

With other players, such statements might be seen as hubris; however, with Montgomerie, they are pretty accurate. Just how accurate remains to be seen. His best finish in this tournament was ninth equal, in 1994.

Barry Lane is one of the more unfortunate absences from proceedings this week. He had to abort his trip here when he hurt his back while picking up his luggage on his return to Britain after finishing fourth in the Portuguese Open on Sunday night.

Agassi finds rhythm in Americans' march of progress

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE stars and stripes flew proudly in Key Biscayne, Florida, yesterday as the United States quartet of Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Jim Courier and Michael Chang marched into the quarter-finals of the Lipton tennis championships.

Sampras, playing close to his best form, beat Todd Martin, his compatriot, 6-3, 6-4 while Agassi, having struggled in his first two matches, found his rhythm in a 6-4, 6-4 defeat of Sébastien Léger, of Canada.

"This is the best match I've played in a couple of weeks now," Sampras, who knows victory here would enable him to reclaim the world No 1 ranking so recently yielded to Thomas Muster, said.

Agassi, despite seeing 14 aces whistled past him, managed to break service three times, largely thanks to a significant improvement in his baseline play. His own service appeared to be in good order as he sent down four aces.

Asked how it felt to record a comparatively rare straight-sets victory, Agassi's reply dripped sarcasm. "It's kind of a surprise, huh? Feels good," he said. He added, more routinely: "It was nice to get up in the second set and close it out. But I still don't feel I'm hitting every shot with 100 per cent commitment."

The star-spangled banner was, however, ruffled as Courier made hard work of beating Michael Tebbutt, of Australia, 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 and Chang struggled before edging past Petr Korda, of the Czech Republic, 3-6, 3-6, 6-3.

The four established United States players will be joined in the quarter-finals by two lesser-known compatriots, Michael Joyce and Vince Spadea, who accounted for, respectively, Marc Rosset, of Switzerland, and Richard Krajicek, of Holland. Goran Ivanisevic, of Croatia, and Arnaud Boetsch, of France, complete the last eight.

In the women's event, Steffi Graf, beat Kimiko Date, of Japan, 7-6, 6-3 to reach the semi-finals.

Roe sees need to move mountains

FROM MEL WEBB IN MADEIRA

FROM the ruins of a 1995 season that saw Mark Roe slide helplessly out of control to the lowest point of his professional golf career, and also reach the low-water mark in his personal life, came one huge consolation. His appearance in the Madeira Island Open, which starts at Santa do Serra here today, is his last before he makes his first appearance in the Masters in two weeks.

Roe admitted only recently that the break-up of his marriage had led him seriously to contemplate suicide. On the course he was guilty of some wildly aberrant behaviour and was disciplined by the PGA European Tour. Always an extrovert and lively character, he was on the brink of becoming an ill-balanced eccentric.

Yet in the midst of all that was crumbling about him, he managed to pull himself round and finish thirteenth in the US Open at Shinnecock Hills, making him the best-placed Briton in the championship. It was that performance that has earned him a place at Augusta; but although delighted to be invited, the niggling feeling within a head that sometimes seems to process a million thoughts a second is that he does not deserve the honour.

"I was 126th in the order of merit in the midst of all my troubles last year," he said. "I'm looking forward to going.

but I know within my own mind that I deserve it a lot less than when I finished ninth in the money-list in 1994."

"That only the winner of the Open Championship gets in while the top 15 in the US Open are invited seems utterly ridiculous to me."

Roe would do well to mind what he says about the men who run the Masters. The good of boys down in Georgia do not take kindly to criticism, no matter how well-intended.

Roe will take with him a new driver, a huge metal-headed job that has only 6.5° of loft — "my putter's got more loft than that," he joked. He also bears with him to Augusta the advice and encouragement of one Severiano Ballesteros.

"Seve saw me practising in Dubai and told me to stand up more to the ball," he said. "He told me that I was a feel player and that's what I should rely on. Coming from the greatest feel player of all time, that was quite something."

Meanwhile, there is the small matter of the next four days to be negotiated over a course that climbs and swoops through dramatically hilly terrain more than 2,000 feet above sea level.

Roe claimed, tongue firmly in cheek, to like the layout. "It's probably the best course Chris Bonington's ever designed." Whatever else, he has obviously not lost his sense of humour.

"I was 126th in the order of merit in the midst of all my troubles last year," he said. "I'm looking forward to going.



Roe will seek to end his spectacular decline in Madeira before the Masters in two weeks

SPORTS LETTERS

Centre of rugby excellence

From the Headmaster of Colston's Collegiate School Sir, Your report on the Daily Mail under-18 rugby cup final (Sport in Schools, March 25) raised the question of sports scholarships.

Colston's Collegiate won a fairly contested final 20-0 and played in a manner which should give heart to all England rugby supporters. The boys have spent a great deal of time practising their skills and have gelled into an effective unit thanks to the inspired coaching of Alan Martinovic and Andy Robinson.

Of those who played in the final, four pupils joined the sixth form from maintained schools which do not have sixth forms. Four others joined from local maintained schools, who play much less rugby than boys at Colston's are lucky enough to experience. The remainder of the team was composed of pupils who have come through the school in the normal way. Jonathan Pritchard and Joseph Ewens, who have been selected to play for England against Scotland, were in the lower school, which admits children from the age of three.

The boys who joined us in the sixth form did so because they wanted to come to a

centre of rugby excellence. They had to fulfil the academic criteria for the sixth form, and those who came from homes where there was not enough income to cover the whole of the school fees were either awarded a Government Assisted Place or a school bursary. We do not offer sports scholarships, which would, anyway, be awarded regardless of parental income.

The Headmaster of QEGS Wakefield is quoted as saying that he favours all-rounders. The pupils in Colston's first XV are like any other group of people of their age. Anyone who saw the immense amount of work put in by some of them on the stage, or backstage, at the last school play or observed the quality of some of their art work, amongst other things, could not fail to appreciate that they had more than one talent.

As has been observed by others, the southern hemisphere is not afraid of winning and the English like nothing better than trying to deny the successful the credit that is rightly theirs. Yours sincerely,

DAVID CRAWFORD,
Headmaster,
Colston's Collegiate School,
Stapleton, Bristol, Avon.

Eyes on the ball in Sri Lanka

From Mr J. Garner

Sir, While on vacation in Sri Lanka I watched its cricket side on television achieve a convincing win over England in the World Cup.

Between overs I looked out of the hotel window and saw boys and girls aged from about five to 18 playing cricket like English boys do in the park. There could be 15 to 20 youngsters fielding to one batsman at one wicket.

I was impressed by the ability of the children to time and judge the ball and

thought that here were the makings of fine cricketers.

I offer two thoughts: English boys are proficient at amazingly fast finger reactions to two-dimensional video games but lack the timing of an eye used to three-dimensional activity; we do not have all-weather surfaces in our parks to replace the street games we used to enjoy before the motor car put a stop to them.

Yours faithfully,

J. GARNER,
44 Ladman Road,
Bristol 14, Avon.

players, including Rob Subbani, who this season played for the Barbarians. I resent the charge of nepotism. Since I have been coach the first team has always been picked on ability. Junior should also remember that, even after he made himself unavailable to play rugby, he was allowed to use, free of charge, the weight-training facilities at Askeans. This does not reflect the comment that his face did not fit.

Yours sincerely,

STEVE HILL (1st XV coach,
Askeans RFC 1991-96),
20 Glynde Road,
Bexleyheath, Kent.

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Absence makes the heart grow acceptable

Each year my resistance to *Hearts of Gold* (BBC1) grows a little less. As another 12 months pass in which I have done nothing grand and certainly nothing heroic, my admiration for the gallant hero who have increases once again. But let me be clear — this twin-track transformation is gradual, very gradual. At current rates, I calculate that I won't start really enjoying this sickly sweet celebration of good deeds until I am 147 years old. Esther Rantzen, I feel certain, will still be around — wearing something imprudently short and cerise.

She was similarly equipped last night, as she kicked off the series where equal helpings of admiration and nausea have become very much the norm. But there was nothing "norm" about the way it began. Having swapped her suit for a pair of generously cut plastic over-trousers, Rantzen appeared to

be engaged in an unspeakable act with a gentleman in a golf bunker. All totally innocent — pause for laughter — we were assured, practising her swing don'tcha know, but those of us reared on a diet of cheap laughs at the expense of misshapen vegetables knew better. My how La Rantzen is

and my how La Rantzen was enjoying herself. She wiggled her bottom playfully and begged impishly: "Once more, once more?" Our gallant, unspecting, life-saving lorry driver (or it was he) bravely stepped forward and assumed the position again. Now this was brave, my heroic stuff. I was about to rush forward and pin a small piece of blue ribbon with a little gold heart on him myself.

Then suddenly I remembered — this wasn't the heroic act, this was the ruse — the ruse which no self-respecting light entertainment show (*This is Your Life, Surprise Surprise* and anything with Jere-

my Beadle or Noel Edmunds) is currently without. "Have you heard of a programme called *Hearts of Gold*?" asked Rantzen at regular intervals. "No," I shouted, "just say no." But each time the heroic victim's response was the same — a shrug, a baleful look sideways and a weary "yes". Gorilla, I believe, is the technical term.

And my how La Rantzen was enjoying herself. She wiggled her bottom playfully and begged impishly: "Once more, once more?" Our gallant, unspecting, life-saving lorry driver (or it was he) bravely stepped forward and assumed the position again. Now this was brave, my heroic stuff. I was about to rush forward and pin a small piece of blue ribbon with a little gold heart on him myself.

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REVIEW



Matthew Bond

sofa, those whose lives had been saved sit on the other. The result is an awful lot of emotion. The heroes are all modesty, horribly embarrassed by the fuss. Those they rescued are all gratitude and enormous smiles. The means may be manipulative, the programme may be 15 minutes too long, but I defy anyone not to be moved by the sight of two burly lorry-drivers sharing a tearful cuddle. Still, as

long as they keep serving up the excruciating bits in-between, I think I can hold out for another decade or seven.

If the Mr UK competition did not exist, then it would not be long before a producer from *Modern Times* (BBC2) came along and invented it. On paper it looked perfect, a sign of our egalitarian, role-reversed times — lots of bronzed male bodies parading in front of drooling, cheering women. In reality, as producer Helen Appio discovered, it was definitely a sock or two short of a well-filled thong.

"What are they going to do?" asked a disbelieving and bitter Ann Sidney (Miss World 1964). "Prance down the planks in G-strings?" Yup, that was pretty much it — which left Appio with a lot of time to fill.

Round and round she went in ever diminishing interviews — knucklehead, Sidney. Eric Morley,

another knucklehead (I mean contestant, not organiser), Frank Warren, Judith Chalmers. But it's a reliable rule of documentary-making that when the interviewee talking most sense is Michael Winner, you know you are in trouble.

Appio's efforts to fill the gaps between the defiantly ungay and frankly uninteresting badinage of the contestants merely served as a reminder that there were better documentaries to be made. What happens to former Miss Worlds, for instance, or the life and times of the incredible and indestructible Morleys.

For the former she was half-way there already, with a well-chosen trio of beauty queens — the cynical Sidney, the wise and wonderful Reina Powell (Miss World 1966) and game for a laugh former Miss Puerto Rico (Miss World 1975). "It changed completely my life," said

the winsome Wilnelia. She was right — she married Bruce Forsyth.

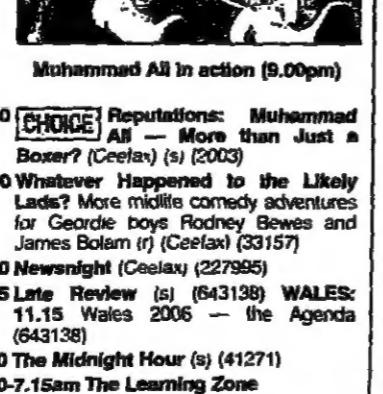
For anyone thinking of tackling the Morley story, here is a tip. Ericbally needs a pair of mid-calf socks. He may know a well-turned ankle when he sees one, but as last night's interviews revealed he certainly does not possess them.

Finally, Pete McCarthy brought *Travelog* (Channel 4) to a close with the sort of "holiday" I could identify with. He was ill, he was miserable and he was reluctantly hopping around Laos in an elderly Russian helicopter. But unlike me in such situations, he had not quite lost his sense of humour. Afflicted with both bronchitis and Luan Prabang belly, he ventured bravely forth in a motorised rickshaw, or tuk-tuk — "named after the cough it induces in passengers as they ingest large quantities of road". A heart of gold is already on its way.

5.00am Business Breakfast (57490)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (Ceefax) (34561)
9.00 News Extra (Ceefax) (627119) 9.20 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (c) (2907515) 9.45 Kylie (s) (5714770) 10.30 Good Morning (s) (24515)
12.00 News (Ceefax) and weather (2858935)
12.05pm Movie Magic (s) (5271577) 12.30 Going for a Song (s) (212157)
1.00 One O'Clock News (Ceefax) and weather (44848)
1.30 Regional News and weather (25712747)
1.40 Neighbours (Ceefax) (s) (1942983)
2.00 Pebble Mill (s) (7580374)
2.25 Racing from Aintree. Live coverage of the 3.10 and 3.45 races. The 4.20 race is on BBC2 (s) (1913577)
4.00 The Morph Files (s) (4082255) 4.10 Highlander (Ceefax) (s) (5734157) 4.35 The Gentle from Down Under (Ceefax) (s) (2564684) 5.00 Newsround (Ceefax) (13313916) 5.10 Grange Hill (Ceefax) (s) (1923864)
5.35 Wildlife (s) (Ceefax) (s) (954816)
6.00 Six O'Clock News (Ceefax) and weather (799)
6.30 Regional News magazines (751)
7.00 Top of the Pops (Ceefax) (s) (3867)
7.30 EastEnders. Nigel spots an intruder. (Ceefax) (s) (835)
8.00 Wildlife on One. Most people regard hippopotamuses affectionately, considering them to be fat and lethargic. But in reality they are ferocious, three-tonne creatures, feared even by crocodiles. Narrated by David Attenborough (Ceefax) (s) (2151)
8.30 Auntie's Sporting Bloomers. Terry Wogan looks at the trials and tribulations of sporting personalities. Joining him tonight are Gary Lineker and the hard man of rugby union, Mick "The Munch" Skinner plus there's a tribute to Murray Walker, the man of many gaffes (s) (Ceefax) (s) (1022)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News (Ceefax), regional news and weather (27232)
9.30 Absolutely Fabulous. Edina has an isolation tank shipped in from Los Angeles (s) (Ceefax) (s) (42283) WALES: Week in, Week Out Special
10.00 Crimewatch UK. Nick Ross and Jill Dando team up with the police to try to solve crimes with help from viewers (359667)
10.45 Question Time. Topical debate from London chaired by David Dimbleby. The guests are Anne McElroy, deputy editor of <i>The Spectator</i> , and Mervyn Campbell (Ceefax) (162022) WALES: 10.45 The slate 11.25 Question Time 12.25em Crimewatch UK Update 12.35-2.10 Film: Agnes of God
11.45 Crimewatch UK Update (Ceefax) (s) (353180)
11.55 FILM: Agnes of God (1985) A newborn baby is found strangled in the cell of a novice nun who professes ignorance of how or why. With Jane Fonda, Anne Bancroft and Meg Tilly. Directed by Norman Jewison (Ceefax) (s) (891634)
1.30am Weather (3164469)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode+ numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with the programme details. Tap in the VideoPlus+ code, then press the red button to record. VideoPlus+ ("PlusCode" and Video Programme are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.)

6.00am Open University: Stressed Materials (93305961 6.25 Miles of Arsenic (9310033)
6.25 A New Role for Men (5626461)
7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (Ceefax and signoff) (1428751) 7.20 Singing (t) (Ceefax) (55954) 8.00 Blue Peter (t) (Ceefax) (s) (5145196) 8.25 Tales of the Tooth Fairies (t) (1469645) 8.30 Puppydog Tales (s) (1954672) 8.40 The Record (5759867)
8.05 Daytime on Two: Seeing Through Science (2984664) 8.20 Lemniscate (9822906) 9.45 Over the Moon (8917461)
10.00 Playdays (4259633) 10.25 Storytime (2469792) 10.45 Teaching Today (956080) 11.15 In Living Memory (8745312) NJ: 11.15 Ulster in Focus (8745313) 11.35 Landmarks (Ceefax) (8368348) NJ: 11.55-12.15 Show Ireland 12.00 Techno (319729) 12.15pm Clementine (9878787) 12.20 Worldly Lunch (507991) 1.00 Lisechool (581260) 1.25 Technology Starters (48217683) 1.40 Numberitis (s) (5490835)
2.00 Tales on Two: Seeing Through Science (44787848) 2.05 Puppydog Tales (t) (44786119) 2.10 Philbert the Frog (t) (44701428)
2.15 Racing from Aintree (87157190) 3.00 News (Ceefax) (5642221) 3.05 Westminster (Ceefax) (6151919) 3.35 News (Ceefax) (4732206) 4.00 Racing (7035190)
4.45 Today's the Day (s) (840138)
5.15 The Oprah Winfrey Show (Ceefax) (s) (5336799)
5.55 Global Warning: Death on the Danube. How man's misuse has changed the River Danube forever (239732)
6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (Ceefax) (s) (312363)
6.45 The O Zone (s) (948667)
7.00 Nine Young Musicians 96. National Woodwind Final (s) (3119)
8.00 Public Eye: Beyond the Drug Wars. Ian Hargreaves, Editor-designate of the New Statesman, looks at approaches to drug abuse (Ceefax) (s) (5747)
8.30 Top Gear. Jeremy Clarkson test-drives a group of amphibious cars (Ceefax) (s) (9654)
9.00 CHOICE: Reputations: Muhammad Ali in action (9.00pm)
9.30 Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? More midlife comedy adventures for George boys Rodney Bewes and James Bolam (t) (Ceefax) (33157)
10.30 Newsnight (Ceefax) (227995)
11.15 Late Review (s) (64318) WALES: 11.15 Wales 2006 — the Agenda (64318)
12.00 The Midnight Hour (s) (41271)
12.30-7.15am The Learning Zone



Muhammad Ali in action (9.00pm)

9.00 CHOICE: Reputations: Muhammad Ali — More than Just a Boxer? (Ceefax) (s) (2003)

10.00 Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? More midlife comedy adventures for George boys Rodney Bewes and James Bolam (t) (Ceefax) (33157)

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12.00 The Midnight Hour (s) (41271)

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CHOICE

3D
TV, 7.30pm

Two former Church of England priests have gone freelance and the Church is not pleased. The Rev Jonathan Blake charges an hourly rate for baptisms, weddings and funerals, promotes himself in a glossy brochure and advertises in *Vogue*. He is happy to marry divorced people, gay couples and even atheists. Like Blake, the Rev Sturge-Ariss left the Church after his marriage broke up. Like Blake, he insists he is still a priest, though his bishop says he has no more authority than a struck-off doctor. Unashamed, Ariss continues to conduct baptisms and marriages, waiving a fee and suggesting only a voluntary donation. His charges for funerals are below the usual rate. The Church accuses him of undercutting it. He says he is promoting privatisation. Whether these mavericks are unique or a wider trend is not revealed.

AfriExpress

Channel 4, 7.00pm

South Africa may be under black majority rule but the white mercenary is still in business. The programme highlights the activities of Executive Outcomes, a company based in Pretoria. It has been active in Angola and Sierra Leone, sending "military advisers" to support the government side in the civil war. The company says it is promoting stability in these countries, but the South African authorities want to curtail its activities. The second report comes from Eritrea, which is trying to persuade a traditionally meat-eating population to switch to fish, of which there is plenty off the Red Sea coast. The Eritreans are unenthusiastic. The final film shows how interest from the West has sparked a revival of Zimbabwe's important indigenous musical instrument, the mbira.

Reputations: Muhammad Ali

BBC2, 9.00pm

Unlike other programmes in this series, this one offers no new slant or theory. What it does is to show how the various sides of Muhammad Ali, boxer, Muslim convert and opponent of the Vietnam War, were interviewed. His public humiliation of Floyd Patterson and Ernie Terrell, two opponents who would not use his Muslim name, was shameful, a flip-side to the arrogance which helped to make him one of the best heavyweight champions. His allegiance to the Nation of Islam split the black civil rights movement. His refusal to fight in Vietnam was unappreciated by black soldiers who served there, as well as losing him three of his prime boxing years. For Ali, sport and politics could not be separated, however much admirers of his sleek and fluent ringcraft wished they could have been.

Undercover Britain: Football Touts

Channel 4, 9.00pm

A football fan, Gary Thompson, takes his hidden camera to Manchester United's ground, Old Trafford, and discovers touts selling EFL seats for £180. After the Taylor inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster, touting was made a criminal offence. Thompson's report suggests that the law is not deterrent. Even when offenders are charged, the fines are laughably small when a profitable week can net £2,000. The programme is illuminating as far as it goes. By posing as a tout Thompson is able to penetrate to the heart of the business and talk to the big operators. He does not, however, manage to track down the sources of the tickets, which are believed to lie within the club. But when he approaches United he gets a terse "no comment" from the club's solicitor.

Peter Waymark

7.00am Sky Sports (Ceefax) (345619)

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